# THE POPE

# THE POPE

## By JEAN CARRÈRE

*Translated by* ARTHUR CHAMBERS

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DEC 21 1951

## TO PAUL BOURGET

PERMIT me, my dear master and friend, to dedicate to you this book as testimony of the sincere admiration I feel for your powerful work and of my affectionate respect for your noble life. This shall be my contribution of homage for the occasion of your recent jubilee.

About twenty years ago, on my return from a visit to Italy, whence I had sent my first articles on the Roman question, I had the pleasure of personally confiding to you my still vibrant impressions while walking with you in the solitary streets of the Saint-Sulpice quarter. And, in your indulgence, you then said to me :

" You ought to collect all your ideas on the two Romes in a synthetic work."

" A synthetic essay on the Eternal City ? " I replied in alarm ; " I should never dare. The subject is too vast."

" Think of it all the same and you will dare."

An irresistible suggestion. How many times I have thought of it since ! How many times, since I became a dweller in Rome, I have contemplated from the other bank the prodigious city of St. Peter ! Then gradually I drew nearer, attracted and seduced, like so many others before me, by its all-pervading spell. And I have simply attempted through the history of the Church to understand its human beauty.

Here, after twenty years, I offer you this slight attempt. It is written, not by a theologian, but by a layman. Make allowance, therefore, for the shortcomings of the author.

Your devoted,

J. C.

Rome, *December*, 1923.

# THE POPE

## CHAPTER I

### WHY ROME IS ETERNAL

"O Rome! thou art a world."
—*Goethe.*

ROME, like the sea, the desert or the mountain, is one of those words on which the imagination builds the scaffolding of dreams until the eyes see the thing itself.

One conjures up grandiose or formidable visions, but when one approaches for the first time, since the reality is never like the dream, one remains for hours or days disillusioned, and murmuring: Is this all? Then one comes back, observes with greater calm, absorbs the new and surprising impressions and then, gradually, one sees the sea more beautiful than one had dreamed, the desert more profound than it had appeared on the maps, the mountain unexpectedly immense. And the further one goes the more clearly one realises the greatness of these great things.

And so with Rome. On arriving there for the first time from France, Germany, England, America, or even from an Italian province, one expects to find a city completely different from the rest, bearing at every street corner the visible mark of its eternity and, for Catholics, of its divinity. One pictures beforehand gigantic cupolas, fairy palaces and churches deep as the sky. As for the men who live in it,

especially in close proximity with the sovereign Pontificate, at most one is resigned to not finding them equipped with angels' wings, gliding over the ground without touching it. And then one finds a town at first sight like the rest, with houses similar to all other houses of Europe and men with powers like those of other men. Here are churches whose exteriors for the most part show nothing peculiarly mystical. Beggars are at the doors of these churches and beadles within, and, mingling with the lives of all these ordinary men, are priests fat or thin, short or tall, with broad feet firmly planted on the common ground, without even that, for us Frenchmen, quasi-symbolical neck-band which we regard as the hall mark of their mission. What, is Rome nothing more than this?

Yes, good visitor or tourist, and you too, earnest pilgrim, this is all! But wait a few months, or come back in a few years, and you shall see how vast is the sea, how lofty are the mountains: you shall feel the power of Rome, the immensity of her Church.

Rome's grip indeed is calm and unhurried, but all who have felt it, that is all who have stayed for long, will agree that it is irresistible.

The first secret of the fascination of Rome lies in the spectacle she offers of three great cycles of civilisation superimposed one upon the other.

For there exist simultaneously, and in harmonious mingling, three Romes: ancient Rome, medieval Rome, and modern Rome.

Now these three Romes are not separate one from the

other ; they have followed one another in an uninterrupted progression ; they have fitted one into the other ; their images persist and mingle in one picturesque and living swarm. Certain cities, like Athens, Susa, Jerusalem, Arles, or Carthage evoke magnificent antiquities, but the flame of their central life has been long extinguished or reduced to a mere flicker. Others, like Venice, Florence, Avignon, Bruges, Nuremberg, Toledo, Sienna are still resplendent with the atmosphere of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, but antiquity does not appear in them, or is nothing but a vague memory, and modern times have gained but a slight hold. Others again, like Paris, London, Berlin, Madrid, metropolises of present day life, preserve from the Middle Ages or Antiquity only scattered relics or the silent halls of a few museums. In Rome, on the other hand, Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the present day intermingle, become lost one in the other, complete each other and present a single spectacle without parallel in the world. When you leave the station you come at once upon Constantine's Thermae, the Basilica of *S. Maria degli Angeli*. If you go to a cosmopolitan hotel you will find it resting against the wall of an old convent. If you visit the Palatine you will hear through the crumbling ruins the hum of an electric factory. If you cross the town on foot, the porch of a Renaissance church or the steps of an imperial palace will serve you as a refuge from a passing motor-car or tram. All this is such an integral part of Rome that one ceases to feel surprise at seeing newsvendors displaying their aggressive placards against the portico of a pagan temple or on the steps of a pontifical basilica.

There is, then, a modern Rome, pulsating with life like any other European capital. There, the passionate existence of to-day, nay of to-morrow, goes on. The intensity of modern life appears there hour by hour in all its forms and with all its activities. World activity diffused through newspapers ; political activity in Parliament ; intellectual activity in the theatres, clubs, academies and innumerable schools of art ; social activity in the Roman drawing-room, the most aristocratic of the entire world ; cosmopolitan activity in the incessant ebb and flow of all the nations represented in the eternal city ; finally, popular activity in the tumultuous and incessant swarming to and fro of an alert, brisk, handsome, active race, sonorous of voice, naturally noble of bearing and clad in brightly coloured costumes.

In reality there are in modern Rome, two Romes, two capitals in one town ; for Papal Rome there maintains all its activity and all its majesty. If the Piazza Colonna and the Corso are the centres of political, literary, social, and popular life, the Borgo quarter, in which are situated St. Peter's and the Vatican, is the centre of the religious life, not only of Rome, but of all Christianity. And certainly this Vatican quarter is far from being a deserted, silent place. Cardinals with great gold crosses, priests of every nationality, monks of every order and every shade, and the youthful legion of seminarists from all over the world, wearing multi-coloured soutanes : what a picturesque, ever changing spectacle ! Add to this constantly renewed bands of pilgrims gathered from the

remotest quarters of the inhabited earth; imagine, mounting and descending the broad staircase of St. Peter's, Poles, Chilians, citizens of New Orleans and Maronites from Asia Minor; Canadians and Spaniards, French and Argentines, Germans and Australians; and all these shepherded by priests and vicars of every nationality, some solemn and stiff, others gesticulating and talkative, wearing hats of infinitely varying shape; throw into the midst of these enthusiastic pilgrims the docile, ever-astonished flock of tourists conducted by Cook's agency and you will have a still faint idea of the bustle that ever hums and seethes round the enormous Vatican.

Now the present, still living, papal Rome leads us to contemplate another Rome whose spell no visitor can escape: the Rome of the Renaissance and Middle Ages, adorned by fifteen centuries of uninterrupted history, during which the great city has been ruled, built, rebuilt, decorated, and magnified by the government of the Holy See.

From Constantine and Theodosius down to Victor Emmanuel there have been popes who have maintained, continued, and augmented the greatness of Rome. All the splendours of art and civilised life have been there accumulated by them, from the unsophisticated frescoes of the time of John VII, discovered by Boni under the church of St. Mary Liberator, down to the tombs carved by Canova and the recent basilica of St. Paul's. Is there anywhere a Reformed Anglican, a Lutheran German, a Calvanistic Swiss, an orthodox Russian, a practising

Israelite; is there even a sincere free-thinker or anti-cleric who can, after visiting Rome, deny the artistic pre-eminence of the papal civilisation? Is there any place in the world where the Middle Ages and the Renaissance appear to us more magnificently than on the banks of the Tiber? What are our rare monuments, buried among a jumble of ignoble houses, beside this forest of glorious cupolas that Rome displays from the summit of the Janiculum? What are even our Sainte-Chapelle and our Notre-Dame, moments of history become eternal, beside this uninterrupted poem of sacred architecture, which, starting from the subterranean basilicas of St. Clement's, St. Laurence's and St. Agnes's culminates in the radiating triumphal nave of St. Peter's? What is our dreary cold museum, the Louvre, beside this gigantic open-air museum, ceaselessly quickened by the life throbbing around it, which constitutes Rome in its entirety? In Rome you see the splendours of the greatest sculptors, not only in the artificial halls and museums, but on the very walls on which they expressed their souls, in the very monuments where with their own hands they chiselled the decorative marble. And do not the architects live still through their work in hundreds of chapels and temples, in the gardens, aqueducts, fountains and proud palaces whose colonnades still dominate the populous streets of Rome, whilst the crowd, equally living, still throngs before their wide, open porticoes?

There is in traditional Rome not a quarter, not a square, not a street on which the enduring grip of pontifical civilisation has not somewhere left its mark; this civilisation

which has not only continued the splendour of ancient Rome but has made a Rome more beautiful than that left by the emperors.

For such is Rome's past that here the disturbance of the smallest stone stirs within us all the memories dear to thinking humanity. Thoroughfares bordered with tombs where consuls and illustrious patricians sleep; temples in which men prayed to the gods on the morning of decisive battles; tribunes whence sounded the voices of the Gracchi, Cicero, Caesar or Antony; triumphal arches whose luminous span opens on the sunlit azure and through which once passed the processions of the empire; amphitheatres where the blood of martyrs under the eyes of the Caesars themselves helped to cement the eternal religion; giant palaces in whose deserted halls the souls of disturbing empresses seem still to roam; columns on which the pomp and circumstance of world conquest live again in bas-relief; this is the material for endless dreaming that Rome offers us, this is what she displays before our admiring gaze. I do not mention the museums where masterpieces of marble and bronze are accumulated. But the street, the public square, the suburb, the surrounding country itself, with its giant aqueducts, everything proclaims the majesty of the single city whose strength has subdued the western world.

"O Rome!" cried Goethe, "thou art truly a world." ("Eine Welt zwar bist du, o Rom!")

And I could not find a better reply to the sallies of frivolous travellers and the astonishment of barbarian

pilgrims than the quasi-religious admiration offered to the spell of Rome by a man who was, beyond doubt, one of the most brilliant intellects of the west.

"To see so much and admire so much exhausts me!" the author of *Faust* confessed in Rome.

To one of his friends he wrote:

"How could I express all I feel here? Before such a spectacle one feels his limitations. It is useless to prepare beforehand, one stands dumbfounded."

The influence of Rome on the life of the Weimar poet was such that he affirmed:

"In Rome I felt for the first time in harmony with myself: I felt happy and rational!"

Then he cried, in an access of lyric emotion:

"From here I see the guiding light!"

Rome is indeed a guiding light: Rome is a world. In all other towns, in Paris, Berlin, New York, Vienna, Madrid, one is conscious of the ephemeral, the individual. One feels that these cities of swell and spray are moments in centuries of onward moving history. In Rome alone one realises the eternal and the universal. There one lives at once the whole of history, and is projected into the future. Even Athens was only a bright stage in the onward march. Rome is a pinnacle whence everything sets out and to which everything returns. All things circle round this crest. From before Romulus, since the mysterious colonists of Asia who left the bones we find to-day at the foot of the Palatine, there is no great act,

no great man whose beginning or end was not in Rome. Rome absorbed Greece, and was for the white races the active and triumphant representative of that Hellenism and Christianity which gave rise to our civilisation. Through Virgil, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Corneille, Goethe: through Caesar, Constantine, Charlemagne, the emperors, the tribunes, the apostles, and geniuses, above all through the glorious succession of bi-millenary popes, Rome has moulded all the modern nations; she it is who has breathed her spirit into the soul of Europe and has been the central hearth-flame of the west.

And not only every Catholic pilgrim, but also every artist worthy of the name, every poet who aspires to understand and create, every intelligent and noble creature who feels himself capable of attaining a high degree of culture must desire to know Rome; for only in Rome can he rise above a strictly provincial impression of human life and become impregnated with the soul of the universe. In the moral influence that a chosen city can exercise on genius Rome is supreme.

This will doubtless shock provincial pride, however wide the "province" may be. Never mind: it is the truth, and must be said. Rome is, by the very evolution of the occidental races, the true capital of the three thousand years of civilisation to which we are the heirs. It is in Rome then, that, like Goethe, we must seek the secret of a serene mind. For Rome is the key to history and offers to restless spirits, within a visible frame, that immense sweep of the past and that perpetuity of

continually renewed life which lights in us the supreme virtue of patience. It is our city, the city of all western peoples ; it is the truly infinite city ; the ideal home land of all who wish to see man's work reaching towards eternity.

But there. Have you wondered whence arose this feeling of eternity that Rome gives? You may have or may not. I think in the majority of cases not. Myself I confess I remained for whole years wandering, dreaming or busy, under the spell of the past and the continual youngness of the present, without ever thinking to try and discover why this unique city is as alive to-day, as outstanding, as at the time of Numa, of the Gracchi, of Augustus or Sixtus-Quintus. Why these thirty centuries of unbroken continuity down to our own time, and even after, when no other town has enjoyed such longevity, when all the other metropolises of ancient history, some prouder and more imperial than Rome, have disappeared finally as their time came? I answered simply, as every one answers : it was the will of destiny ! And, like Goethe, I was content to think that Rome bears in herself her secret of eternity. Sincere readers, confess that for the most part you have not gone much further, and you, too, indifferent or believer, Protestant or Jew, atheist or even Catholic, have quietly submitted to the existing fact without troubling or daring to seek the cause.

And after all, why should we be more exacting than Goethe? Rome exists because she exists. She is the eternal city and that is enough.

"I must keep alive the memory of this happy day!" the author of *Faust* exclaims after beholding the spectacle of Rome.

And again he says:

"Let me absorb it all as it comes. It will arrange itself later. I am not here to judge in the light of my preconceived ideas. I want to force myself to capture this grandeur. . . ."

And where did Goethe think to capture this grandeur? In the persistent memory of ancient Rome. If Rome is so strong and so beautiful to-day, it is because she was beautiful and strong in the time of Caesar and Marcus Aurelius, and she has so dominated the world that the marvelling nations have left her all her prestige.

And, moreover, this predominance of the pagan greatness of Rome, stretching from the past to the present so haunted the brain, enlightened and clear sighted as it was, of the author of the *Roman Elegies*, that when he passed into the Town of Assisi, that town which still vibrates with the soul of him who on earth was nearest to Christ, that town whose worth and radiance even for sceptics rest upon the nimbus of the divine Francis, Goethe sees in its sacred stones merely the ruins of a temple of Minerva!

Further, this strange faith in a kind of historic divinity which in itself would make the greatness of the Roman Empire is psychologically very easily explained. It forms one of the elements of the classical training of our minds. It is one of the literary faiths that we absorb from adolescence by reading Livy and Virgil, and which never leaves

our brain because, for one reason, no one attempts to drive it out. How many Catholics even, how many priests, how many learned prelates I have heard express this specious idea that the Church is, from the purely historical point of view, merely the result of the Roman Empire whose prestige she carried on ; as if the prestige of Heliogabalus, Nero, or even Augustus were necessary to the Vicar of Christ!

How many believe that Rome and the Roman Empire bore in themselves, if not the seeds of eternity, at least those of strength superior to all the other political systems that have governed the world! For example, in a recent book by Léon Daudet, *Sylla et son destin*, a book full of fire and brilliance, I come across the following sentence :

> " If such a statesman (Sylla) had lived like an eagle or a carp for two or three centuries, gradually modifying his constitution and assuring his continuity by removing the germs that caused demolition and death, he would have made impossible the subsequent invasions of the barbarians, and assured the smooth merging of the ancient civilisation into the new."

All the prejudice of our blind admiration for ancient Rome is condensed in the forceful synthesis of these few words! And so warlike, pagan Rome bore in herself the elements of immortality. This is why she was able to evade the onslaught of the Barbarians, and passed without shock from the Senate to the Sacred College. This is why the soul of the old world, which by its own evolution was finally to bring forth the coliseums with their bloody combats, was able quite naturally to infuse itself into the soul of the new which was to raise the basilicas of St. Agnes's, St. John's, St. Mary's, and St. Peter's. What greater proof can I give of the strange state of mind produced even in the greatest

geniuses by the name of Rome? And if a Catholic writer like Léon Daudet can, as a matter of course and without raising any retort, let fall from his lucid mind such a conception of the past, how can one be astonished at the veritable deliriums of idolatrous ecstasy that have poured from the more romantic enemies of Christianity when speaking of the Rome of the Caesars?

That poor madman Nietzsche, whom our tumultuous generation has so admired for a quarter of a century has, in a book entitled *The Antichrist* (which in reality should have been called *The Anti-Christian*) developed with passionate, sometimes overwhelming fervour this conception that has since become popular, that Rome bore in herself the germ of her eternity.

I quote at length the divagations of Nietzsche; they are worth it. They may help by their very exasperation to demonstrate the absurdity, the futility of certain prejudices that have become traditional.

Let us, in passing, remind those who have forgotten it, that Nietzsche has always been the most bitter enemy of Christianity. His morbid and inordinate pride, which drove him mad, was such as to represent him in his work as a sort of personal enemy of Christ, whom he has covered with abuse and insults that raise a smile even in the admirers of the German philosopher and become inoffensive by their very puerility, like those of an angry child. Nietzsche, who poses to himself quite frankly as an antichrist, reproaches Jesus with having been the greatest enemy of humanity, and Christians with having laid waste

all around them, like criminals and anarchists. Among other enormities with which Nietzsche accuses the martyrs of imperial Rome is that of having caused the downfall of that entirely admirable monument called the Roman Empire, which, without them, "would still endure." And he says:

"That which existed *aere perennius!* the Roman Empire, the most splendid form of organisation under difficult conditions that has ever been realised, so splendid that by comparison all that preceded it and all that followed has never been anything more than dilettante, imperfect and makeshift; these anarchist saints have made it an 'act of piety' to destroy the world, that is to say the Roman Empire, until there remained no stone upon another, until the Germanic tribes and other boors were able to make themselves its masters. Christianity has been the vampire of the Roman Empire, annihilating in a single night this enormous labour of the Romans, to win territory for a great culture which will pass with time. Is this not yet understood? The Roman Empire that we know, that the history of the Roman province teaches us to know better and better, this admirable work of art in the grand style was a beginning; its edifice was calculated to be displayed through thousands of years; never down to the present day has there been building on this scale, never even has such construction been dreamt of *sub specie aeterni*! This organisation was strong enough to withstand bad emperors: the chance of personalities can have no part in such things, and this is the first principle of all architecture. Yet it was not strong enough to withstand the most corrupt species of all corruptions, the Christian. . . .

"In vain all the labour of the ancient world: I find no word to express my feelings on a thing so monstrous! And when one thinks that this work was only a beginning, that, with a consciousness of self enduring as granite, they scarcely did more than lay the foundations of a work that was to last for several thousand years! Vain all the sense of the word ancient! . . . What good were the Greeks, what good the Romans? Nothing more than a memory of a single night's dream!—Greeks! Romans! Nobility of instinct, taste, methodical striving, genius for organisation and administration, the *will* of the future of humanity and faith in the future. The great *affirmation* of all things, visible under the outward form of the Roman Empire, visible to all the senses, the grand style, not only of art but

truth, life. . . . And it was not a cataclysm of nature that destroyed all this in a single night. It was not the trampling of the German tribes or other tardigrades! Vampires, cunning, sneaking, invisible, and anaemic, have dishonoured and sucked it dry . . ."

"Christianity has thwarted us of our heritage of ancient genius!"

I will stop. I could quote dozens of pages of this kind in a crescendo of frenzy. It is impossible to push enthusiasm for ancient Rome and ancient genius farther. And so without these destroyers, without these "criminals," the Christians, the empire of Tiberius and Caligula was imbued with the power to live for "several thousands of years"? It was built *sub specie aeterni*. What! Was all that was required to destroy this "architecture of granite" a few obscure proselytes from the lowest classes who, for the most part, allowed themselves to be slain wholesale, without any other weapons than speech and prayer? What feeble granite, what badly tempered bronze!

Now, whereas Nietzsche reproaches the Christians with having caused the complete obliteration of this masterpiece of human organisation, and of having "annihilated it in a single night"—what night?—another philosopher of the last century, as celebrated and more reasonable than Nietzsche, complains, on the other hand, that the Christian Church and the Papacy have preserved too much of the form and spirit of the ancient empire: I refer to Taine.

After having watched and described a pontifical ceremony at St. Peter's, the illustrious author of the *Voyage en Italie* expresses the following reflections:

"Here, after fourteen centuries, is the *finale* of the pomp of Rome; for it is indeed the ancient Roman empire that lives and endures to-day.

It sank into the earth under the blows of the barbarian club; but, with the universal rejuvenation of things, it has reappeared under a new form, no longer temporal but spiritual. The whole history of Italy is condensed in these words: It has remained too *Latin*. The Heruli, the Ostrogoths, the Lombards, the Franks did not settle there nor sufficiently dominate it; it has not been germanicised like the rest of Europe. It found itself again in the tenth century almost as it was three hundred years before Christ."

It would be difficult to hold opinions on this great historical subject more diametrically opposed than those of these two philosophers, both anti-Catholic, Nietzsche and Taine. Whereas for the one the crime of the Christians is to have, "in cowardice," razed the Roman Empire to its foundations, for the other, the wrong committed by the Papacy is, on the contrary, that of having preserved too much of the Empire and kept Italy "too Latin."

Let us now see whether, among the non-Italian and non-Catholic writers who have talked of Rome, there are not some as celebrated as Nietzsche and Taine who, without passion and *a priori* prejudice, come nearer to the truth.

There are indeed several, but I will quote only two, both very illustrious, accounted very wise by their contemporaries, and whom the Church cannot claim for her own. The first was Montesquieu, the forerunner of the encyclopaedists, who deliberately banished from his historical conception all mythical or religious interpretation, and who in a few lines celebrated magisterially the obsequies of pagan Rome.

"Among so many disasters," he says, speaking of the decadence of the Empire, "one seeks with melancholy curiosity the fate of the town of Rome. It was, so to speak, defenceless; it could be easily starved; the wide stretch of its walls made them difficult to guard. As it

was situated in a plain it could be easily taken by assault; all the resources of its inhabitants had been exceedingly diminished. The emperors were obliged to withdraw to Ravenna, formerly protected by the sea as Venice is to-day."

The other writer is not even, like Montesquieu, of Latin blood and Catholic birth, he is of the north; the natural enemy of Rome and the Papacy, as much by race as by religious education—the English historian Gibbon. When, in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* he comes to speak of Gregory the Great he writes:

"... the lofty tree, under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. ...

Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle, which again restored her to honour and dominion."

From this last sentence we see that the aged Gibbon also, before Goethe, before Nietzsche and so many others—and before Léon Daudet—believed that Rome, the fascinating Rome of our classical studies, bore in herself her "vital principle," her principle of eternity, which always, under one form or another, was to prevent her death. Born and brought up as he was outside the Catholic Church, it would have been difficult for the English historian to go farther. Instead of attacking him, as does the terrible and magnificent Veuillot, one must give him credit for his objectivity and admire him for having impartially recognised and pointed out the historical truth concerning the Eternal City, for having realised that without a complete, unhoped-for transformation Rome was condemned to disappear, or at least to sink into irreparable decadence.

And after all, why should this city, whose evolution was so similar to that of so many other ancient metropolises, have borne in the mere logic of her temporal history any secret of immortality? In what does she differ, in herself, from Thebes, Memphis, Babylon, Nineveh, Ecbatana, or Tyre? On what basis does one still dare to speak of her predestined eternity, indicated by simple historical law? Is it because her empire has endured longer than any other? But what are these thousand years that separate Romulus from Theodosius beside the incalculable succession of centuries that flowed between the erection of the Sphinx of Giseh and the tragic death of Cleopatra? Is it because her empire was the widest flung of all? But was it ever greater than the Assyria of Sardanapalus or the Persia of Darius?

Now these empires died by the very force of circumstances, and that of Rome would also have died, Rome herself would have been effaced like Babylon and Nineveh. The same reasons which led to the fall of some should have brought about the fall of others. Rome had had her birth, her expansion, her apogee, her decadence. Empire built by the sword should have perished by the sword. Rome had gradually absorbed all the neighbouring peoples, such as the descendants of Ninus, down to the arrival of the Sarganides; then she had conquered the great nations around her, from the Sarganides down to the time of Sardanapalus. And inevitably, like the others, she should have found her weakness and her death in the very vastness of her great domains, impossible to maintain against the

inevitable onward march of the new nations. Remember the history of the great nations of the East and compare it with that of Rome. There is no difference in the fundamental logic of their evolution. From Romulus to Augustus the march towards empire developed with the same relentless strength, I might venture to say with the same dynamic force that was developed by all the great empires that preceded hers. From Augustus to Augustulus her decomposition, at first invisible and to some degree constant, then more visible but slow and finally manifest and headlong, conformed exactly to the precedent that all known history had already given.

For to believe, like Léon Daudet, that Rome, even with an uninterrupted succession of Syllas, could have escaped the Barbarian migrations, is pure dreaming. And to affirm, like Nietzsche, that any empire whatsoever is built *sub specie aeterni* is to show radical ignorance of the most elementary psychology of humanity. A people cannot die when it is formed morally and materially in a very definite geographical mould, and if at some time it dies, or seems to die, it may and should be born again. A magnificent example is Italy. For a nation is a natural phenomenon and is subject to the laws of nature. But an empire is an essentially artificial thing and bears in itself all the germs of final destruction : an empire is built upon the domination of the strong and the submission of the weak. It is constructed by the will, ambition and cupidity of man. Now all that may stand as long as the strength of the one and the weakness of the other are maintained. But what madman,

apart from Nietzsche, can suppose that such artificial equilibrium is imperishable? A moment comes when the weak rise, driven by hatred, the spirit of liberty or their very misery; when the strong, enervated by luxury, pleasure, and too facile confidence in their superiority, lose their grip. Then cracks appear in the edifice *aere perennius*, the idea of which stirs the exacerbated romanticism of the German philosopher. Breaches gape; the younger or stronger neighbours swarm in and the internal elements disintegrate. This has been the history of all empires. It has been that of the Roman Empire. It was substantially condemned from the time of Augustus.

On the very day when the testament of the first emperor was read to the Senate they were reading the death warrant of the empire. Augustus, indeed, recommended his successors to restrict the domination of Rome within the frontiers nature seemed to have traced for it: the ocean, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the sands of the African desert. But it was an error on the part of that man who had otherwise shown himself so circumspect a statesman. He saw the morrow but not the day after. And the day after brought the inevitable forward rush of the Barbarians. His first mistake in fact was to believe that the Roman Empire could have *any* natural frontiers. Italy had them, but not the empire. His next mistake was to decree that the development of this empire should stop. The empire could only continue to live by continual expansion. To limit it deliberately was to rouse the neighbouring peoples to insolence, especially when they were

young and poor, fond of war and attracted by the splendour of Roman luxury. And, moreover, his successors could not blindly obey the will of Augustus. Not more than a few years after his death, Claudius ordered the invasion of Britain. And the wise Trajan himself had to undertake the expedition against the Dacians, who had insulted the majesty of Rome. It was fate. And in the same way it was fate that made those restless Barbarians watch for the relaxing of the city's sovereignty. This was inevitable. It may be said then that the end of the empire was already inevitable after the massacre of the legions of Varus.

It will be seen that the Christians had nothing to do with it. Without the Christians, on the other hand, not only the empire, but Rome herself would have disappeared or become a second-rate, profligate city. She would have been destroyed by Attila or Genseric as were Aquileia and Carthage, or would have become tributary to some Vandal or Gothic chief, who would have established a duchy or a kingdom there, with a King or Duke of Rome like the King of Naples or the Duke of Milan. The ruins of the city would have been used to build the palace of the new conquerors, or have sunk into some slough of isolation and oblivion, the obscure vassal of a more convenient, more modern capital, as was the case with Syracuse and Palermo ; for ancient Rome, having become a desolate village, would have faded into melancholy dependence upon some more fortunate city like Naples or Florence, and her glorious ruins would not have saved her from historical decrepitude

any more than they saved Thebes, Babylon, Athens, or Jerusalem.

Such was the destiny, the only destiny humanly speaking, that Rome bore in herself, had there not come a certain Peter of Galilee and his companions.

## CHAPTER II

### "TU ES PETRUS"

THERE can be no further doubt about it: the eternity of Rome is not due to Rome herself but to a strange power which came to abide, unknown to Rome at first and later in spite of her, within the walls of the mistress city. And so the Rome that lives to-day, the Rome we see and love, is not the town of the Gracchi, Caesar and Marcus Aurelius. That Rome has long been buried beneath the ground. It has been buried, whether one will or no, as deeply as the Athens of Pericles or the Carthage of Hannibal. It has disappeared entirely with its last lamentable emperors. The "blows of the barbarian club," of which Taine speaks, drove it into the ground for ever; and it has never reappeared under any new form, whatever the literary pagans may think. There remains nothing but broken columns, arches gaping over the void, temples with ruined porticoes and amphitheatres, which, after being transformed into fortresses by the turbulent peoples of the Middle Ages, are to-day merely objects of curiosity to astonished tourists and of the polemics of harmless archaeologists.

Now there remains much the same thing of a more or less scattered type in towns like Arles, Syracuse, Agrigentum, or even the very banal Pompeii. If the ruins of Rome stir within us more emotion, it is firstly, as I have said above, because Rome continues to live and shine; and

further because our imagination, stimulated by history, throws round the dead stones a halo of dreams and memories. When the dreamer is called Goethe or Petrarch, or even Leopardi the dream is doubtless splendid, but it is none the less mere mist and smoke. It is our imagination, quickened by several centuries of classical literature, that has created in the human brain this conviction that ancient Rome has not completely disappeared. And it was of old this same imagination, transmitted and developed through the centuries, that made a few madmen, geniuses or men swollen with pride, conceive the plan of resuscitating ancient Rome. But none succeeded, even apparently. They all failed; Republicans and Imperialists, those who wanted to evoke Cincinnatus, or Cato, or those who tried to ape Sylla or Augustus. They shattered their own poor lives, like the chimerical Crescentius and the equivocal Cola di Rienzo; they sacrificed in vain their sceptres and their crowns, like Henri IV, Barbarossa, Frederick II, Charles V, and Napoleon; and, with an ambition perhaps more conscious than all the rest, the terrible Caesar Borgia only succeeded in acquiring the reputation of a raving monster.

The fact is, that into the foundation of what was to be really "The Eternal City" there entered something which was quite distinct from the actual foundation of the ancient town in the fabulous times of Romulus or his like; something which was indeed the exact opposite; a "stone," as indestructible as the other was perishable, for the other was force and this was an idea: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam.*

Simon, called Peter, is then the new stone on which an eternal edifice was built. Let us first see who Simon Peter was and we shall better understand the edifice built upon him.

Rome, indeed, whatever glory may have been shed upon her by other apostles who came within her walls to die, is, first and foremost, essentially the "town of Peter." One can know her and understand her only by knowing and understanding the man whom, for close on twenty centuries, the Church has claimed for her first Chief.

When an institution has survived two thousand years, and when, after two thousand years, it is as solid as at the beginning, it is absurd or insane to dispute its strength. It is strong. Now, when for two thousand years this institution has never ceased to remember the name, the acts, the words, the thoughts, nay even the weaknesses of the man who laid its first stone, one may conclude that the soul of this man still fills and quickens the work, and that he continues to live in it, if only through the ceaselessly reiterated suggestion of the same constantly evoked memory.

I should like here, as far as possible, to depict the man rather than the saint, the study of the latter being beyond my powers. For if there exists in all Christian history, in all history even, a being whose existence is open to no doubt, a being who is in every sense a man, and whose strong, broad feet are planted literally upon the ground, that man is incontestably Simon of Galilee. Even those who the most passionately deny the Gospel—I speak of

those who have studied it—have never attempted to throw doubt on the existence of Simon Peter; and the last in date of these, M. Guignebert, professor of the Sorbonne, speaks with certainty of "the robust confidence of Peter" and the preponderating influence that he exercised over the assembled disciples.

It seems to me impossible to read the Gospel without being struck and moved by the breath of humanity and simplicity that emanates from it, as one sees the people who are spoken of there moving in such a natural atmosphere. But there is one figure especially that stands out with the relief and colour of irresistible truth: that is Simon, the fisherman, who was to become a fisher of men. Had such a "type" been invented by the imagination of a man, or several men, it would be necessary to conclude without hesitation that these men were poets and psychologists infinitely greater than Homer, Virgil, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, or Balzac; for from Nestor or Ulysses down to Père Goriot or Colonel Chabert, through don Quixote, Hamlet, or Wilhelm Meister, there is no character more perfectly or completely conceived than Simon, son of Jonah. So much a man and so much a hero! Yes, a hero quite literally, but of such simplicity that his heroism has not always been perceived. At times some of his acts have even been attributed to an excess of prudence, when on the contrary all that he said, all that he did is marked by the typical qualities of the man: his impetuosity, enthusiasm, devotion, and courage. But withal, so brave, so *bonhomme*, in the most etymological

and widest sense of the word, that one cannot help loving him for his work even more than for his high mission.

I have so often read and re-read the passages of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in which Simon Peter moves so naturally that I do not want any more help from the commentators and exegetists who have spoken of him, even though they be the holiest fathers of the Church. It is in the direct testimony of those who saw and knew him that he must be sought and realised ; and for my part I have sought him there, if I may venture to say so, so affectionately, that I have actually "seen" him; that I have thought to see him live and walk before me with his broad plebeian shoulders, his strong feet with their wide-spread toes, his hands reddened by water and sun, his round, bearded face lit by a paternal smile, his stubborn forehead, and especially his tender eyes, those kind, transparent eyes, laughing in their wrinkled frames, such as one sees in the sailors of Saint-Malo or of Saintes-Maries de la Mer, in those fishermen whose lives are passed in the eternal and daily adventure of which every thought and every gesture belongs as much to the ideal as to life.

How well one can understand that Jesus should have loved him and taken him to Himself at once ; loved him even for his apparent faults, more disarming, if possible, than his delightful virtues ! For it is obvious that Jesus, whose divine amusement it was to scold him, did not only forgive him his few faults ; He loved him for these very faults, for He knew well all the sincere generosity that lay in what we men call his weaknesses.

I imagine myself present at the scene of their meeting on the banks of the Lake of Tiberias as it is so soberly described by St. Matthew. Evidently Jesus has often walked in meditation along the lake. He has talked with the men of the people, poor women, and children. His healing words must have drawn around Him the surprised and curious crowd, and all men feel His spell. Now, among those who watch Him pass and follow Him with moved glance, Jesus notices these two brothers, Simon and Andrew, leaving their nets to come and see and hear Him. And one day He goes and talks with them. The chronicler St. Matthew only gives us the last words of the conversation. We have long known that the Gospels are in some degree a synthesis of the story of Christ, suggestive conclusions rather than analytical narrations, relating only what it is indispensable to know. We may therefore be allowed to suppose that Jesus talked at some length with these two brothers into whose inner soul He looked : He questioned them about their life, their dreams, their ambitions, and finally said to them : Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men !

And they, straightway leaving their nets, followed Him. What a confident, impulsive gesture, and, to use a word in vogue to-day, what touching optimism ! One can see Simon make up his mind the first and Andrew follow him. Where are they going ? They have no idea : but they know that they are going somewhere where all will be well. That is it ! This passer-by has something divine about him. They love him already. He cannot lie. And so they follow him.

And it is precisely this silent impulsiveness and this very optimism which are to be the essential virtues of Simon, become Peter, and it is in this way too that he is to sin, through excess of optimism and impetuosity.

There is charming proof of it in the 14th Chapter of St. Matthew.

We are again near the Lake of Tiberias after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. All are satisfied. Jesus dismisses the people and orders His disciples to get into the boat and go to wait for Him on the other bank. But we will leave the eye-witness Matthew to take up the word :

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves : for the wind was contrary.
25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.
26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it is a spirit ; and they cried out for fear.
27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid.
28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.
29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.
30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.
31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?
32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.
33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Is it not touching, and amusing too, with a kind of divine humour, this picturesque scene in which Jesus,

sure of Himself, takes delight in testing the courage of this disciple whom He appreciates more than the others and knows to be capable of the most spontaneous impulses, followed by sudden but such human anxiety! For after all Simon, without reflecting, threw himself upon the waves to go to Him. Courage lies not in being unafraid but in exposing oneself to fear.

And far from being diminished, Jesus's esteem for Simon could not but be increased. The only proof I require is that magisterial and supreme dialogue in which the Master entrusts to His beloved disciple the keys of his Church. It is in all the Gospels and I will content myself with recalling it:

*Jesus*—But whom say ye that I am?
*Peter*—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Here we touch the sublime in Simon's character. That splendid natural impulsiveness which made him leave the lake without looking behind; that bold impulsiveness which made him leap from the ship at the risk of sinking into the sea, here passes from the body to the soul and mind, and this fisherman by this outburst of faith and love rises above all other men and becomes at one swoop the most worthy to found the eternal monument that the Master came to bring to men.

And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter.

The friendship of Jesus for this great-hearted disciple here reaches the apogee of divine splendour. It is in truth the most splendid consecration in the history of all humanity. And how simple! How clearly one sees the

mutual love that unites for ever the Messiah and the apostle !

But the scene that follows in the same chapter, if not as sublime as the other, which would be impossible, is also very moving in its humanity :

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee Lord : this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

It is delicious, this scolding by the Master immediately after the sublimity of the consecration. And it is here, perhaps, that the active optimism of Peter is revealed, in all its ingenuous charm.

The keys of the future have just been handed to him. One can guess what the feelings of this sensitive, enthusiastic man must be. Celestial joy sweeps over him. Every thing is touched with azure and gold. Tears of tenderness rise to his eyes. He is ready to do great things.

Now, here, almost immediately, we have Jesus revealing to His chosen apostles, in a low voice and apart from the band of the disciples, what is to happen to Him during His predestined passion. . . .

One can understand the emotion and sudden sadness of St. Peter : " My God ! is it possible this Master, so kind, so gentle, so young, whom I love so well, is to be seized,

persecuted, buffeted, killed? No! no! it is not possible! God will not allow it."

Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

For Simon Peter is so confident, especially on a day like this, that, to employ a phrase of another period, he is convinced that *all will come right.*

And Jesus answered him with some sharpness. He called him *Satan.* And poor Simon must have been very crest-fallen. But in substance, Jesus, who read his heart after having scolded him, must have pardoned him very quickly, for He saw what love dragged from the sensitiveness of Simon this cry of revolt against the inevitable!

That is why, in spite of the scoldings of Jesus of which the Gospels tell us, we see that Simon Peter always takes the first place in dealings with the Master.

When, in the synagogue of Capernaum, Jesus revealed to His disciples new truths at which they were amazed; many of them rose saying:

This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

And the gospel of St. John adds:

CHAPTER VI

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away?
68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.
69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

One feels through these condensed pages of the Gospel that an ever growing intimacy has been established between the Master and the man who may already be called the

chief of the disciples, for it is he who always acts as spokesman when there is some delicate question to be asked of Jesus. And even, at times, one feels that the others, more timid or less self-confident, urge him to speak for them. And Simon Peter, always devoted, throws himself forward for the others. Let us quote, for example, the passage of St. Matthew in which Jesus speaks of the rich and the poor, and utters the famous sentence :

> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

The disciples are "much amazed," says the Evangelist, and they murmur, doubtless a little anxiously : "Who then can be saved ?" But the good Simon Peter, seeing their anxiety, remembers that like himself, they have left all to follow Jesus, and coming forward he asks the Master, in the name of all the others :

> Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore ?

A bold question truly, for it was a demand to know the secret of the future. There is no doubt that Simon Peter was exposing himself to a friendly rebuff, as he had done several times already, but this time Jesus did not show any sign of scolding. He saw what was passing in the souls of these good men who had left all for Him, and who by a very human stirring of curiosity wanted to know whether they were to attain happiness later. He replied, not only to Peter who asked the question, but to them all, and predicted the glory to come. *Jesus autem dixit illis.* Thus then does

Simon appear to us always true to himself, from the time he left the lake to the eve of the Passion. An honest man and a brave man; his heart always ready to leap, his spirit always ready to soar. It is impossible not to love and admire him at the same time. Now how comes it about that all at once, in the gravest crisis of the Master's life, this man of heart and courage took up such an attitude that for the rest of history, in spite of his great destiny, the very men who venerate him will accuse him of weakness, ingratitude, and even cowardice.

Yes, cowardice, we say it quite frankly. The opinion generally held about the chief of the disciples is that in the great scene of the Passion, when he made his way into the palace of Caiaphas, he was completely without courage and denied his Master from very fear.

Malherbe's lines, in his *Larmes de saint Pierre*, his first poem, imitated from the Italian poet Tansillo, is well known:

> " De vaillant fait couard, de fidèle fait traître,
> Aux portes de la peur abandonne son maître
> Et jure impudemment qu'il ne le connaît pas."

And later in a bold epic, translating into words the reproach that Peter read in the eyes of Jesus, he makes the angry Master say:

> " Toutes les cruautés de ces mains qui m'attachent
> Les mépris effrontés que ces bourreaux me crachent,
> Les preuves que je fais de leurs impiétés,
> Pleines également de fureur et d'ordure,
> Ne me sont une pointe aux entrailles si dure,
> Comme le souvenir de ta déloyauté.

"Je sais bien qu'au danger les autres de ma suite
Ont eu peur de la mort, et se sont mis en fuite ;
Mais toi, que plus que tous j'aimais parfaitement,
Pour rendre en me niant ton offense plus grande,
Tu suis mes ennemis, t'assembles à leur bande,
Et des maux qu'ils me font prends ton ébattement."

Now, while allowing for any exaggeration that may be allowed to a poetic development, there can be no doubt that Malherbe's view was that which Christianity had long held even then. It is a strange thing that, through the twenty centuries during which thousands upon thousands of readers have perused the Gospels, no one has yet tried to explain the reason for this famous "denial." It does not seem to have occurred to men's minds that if the son of Jonah had been cowardly, treacherous and disloyal to the point the good Malherbe indicates, and the tradition of the faithful admits, it would be indeed surprising that Jesus should first have given him, and later left in his hands the keys of His Church.

In this there must be a vast misunderstanding which must be corrected sooner or later. I confess that, for my part, the more I read and re-read the stories of the four Evangelists, and gradually saw the beaming, sympathetic face of the fisherman Simon define itself, the more I was struck, as by a universal mistake, by the nineteen-century-old judgment, or rather prejudice, of which the first of the apostles has been the victim. And, moved, less by Christian zeal than by the spirit of human justice, I swore that, when the opportunity offered of publicly defending him, I would not hesitate to struggle back against that immense current that has now been rolling for nearly twenty centuries.

For I cannot think that Simon Peter was cowardly, or disloyal, or even simply too prudent. He was, on the other hand, courageous and even rash, rushing forward heedless of danger as he had done the night he risked his life on the waves. And in saying this I am not going in any way contrary to the Gospel; it is, on the contrary, solely in the words of the Gospel that I see this truth demonstrated.

Let us then follow the intimate drama of the "denial" from the beginning, word by word, in the Gospels themselves. First the announcement by Him who foresees everything. It is immediately after the Last Supper, when Jesus reveals to the apostles all the secrets of His mind and heart. They leave the chamber and make their way towards the Garden of Olives.

St. John, Chapter XIII

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

This then is still Peter true to himself. He is still ready to dash forward. Now, what does his Master answer? He does not scold. He does not even grow angry. He contents Himself with warning him about his vain, too petulant zeal, which, by the force of circumstances, is to recoil on Simon himself, and put him in the ridiculous position of

thrice denying the Master he wished to save. Jesus indeed knows well that this denial will not come from the heart, and that Peter's faith will be untouched.

St. Luke, Chap. xxii. 32.—But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.

What Jesus is especially anxious to avoid is that Simon Peter should follow him and try to oppose what has to be.

Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

And Peter, holding obstinately to his plan, will not give way, but persists in protesting:

Why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

It is exactly the same situation, but more tragic, as that I have already referred to as related by St. Matthew in Chapter xvi. of his Gospel, verses 21–23, when Jesus foretold His death and Simon protested, to be sharply scolded by Jesus who called him "Satan"! For the bold optimism of Simon was to persist to the end; and to the end, he was to believe that "everything would come right." Hence his mistake, but his only mistake. Let us follow what was to happen that night when every minute was equivalent to a century.

They are in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus takes with Him His three favourite disciples, James and John his cousins, and Simon Peter, that same Peter to whom He had already predicted the "denial." Hours of anguish for

the God, made man, when all His humanity is striving to conquer grief, almost despair. It must be confessed that at this moment Peter and the two others betray some weakness. Very human and purely physical weakness. They cannot resist sleep. And while the Master meditates, prays and suffers, they, in the silence of the night and amid the perfume of the foliage, drop down on the soft grass.

Before condemning them let us not forget, if we have carefully followed this day in the story of the Gospels, that it has been a peculiarly arduous one. Since morning they have been busy with the preparations for the Last Supper. They have been to seek the house where the Passover was to be celebrated. They have not had a minute's rest. Then followed the Last Supper, with all its sublime and tragic emotions, the announcement of the great drama of the morrow, the revealing of the traitor. Let us not forget that these are men, wholly human. Night has come and, left by the Master, who has drawn apart alone, they struggle vainly, and their eyes close, *erant enim oculi eorum gravati.* Jesus rebukes them, but what of that? We have seen it is His habit to scold those He loves; but He is not seriously angry with them, for a few minutes later He says to them: *Dormite jam et requiescete!*

And awake they do, and what an awakening, especially for Peter!

It is the very moment when the traitor comes, followed by a great multitude armed with swords and staves.

Now what does Simon Peter, who has just been weak

enough to fall asleep, do when, hardly yet awake, he finds himself faced by "a great multitude with swords and staves"? Still true to his impetuous nature, he draws his sword, hurls himself upon them and strikes; and he strikes so effectively that he just misses splitting the head of one of the High Priest's soldiers; actually he cuts off his ear.

Let us pause at this generously impulsive action of Simon Peter's. It is one of the most typical manifestations of his character and explains all that is to follow.

Here we have one man followed by only ten companions, all unarmed, or, to be precise, one of whom is armed, for we learn from St. Luke that they had only two swords among them. Peter knows beyond all doubt that the Master will not defend himself and does not even wish to be defended. But his love and courage get the better of him and, without thinking of the possible consequences, he charges the host of Caiaphas single-handed. What King Clovis, what Warrior Roland, what Knight Bayard has ever done more? Let us remember that the soldiers came in the name of Jewish authority, that they represented the might of the law. It was certain death that Simon Peter faced. And a few hours before he had said:

> Though I should die with thee!

And according to the laws of men he has just committed the crime of rebellion, of assault upon the representative of the law. Its gravity is such that of the four Evangelists three do not dare to name the perpetrator of such an act, but say: *one of them which were with Jesus*—as

though wishing to divide such a responsibility among the eleven! But John, fortunately, does not hesitate to name Simon Peter, and also to tell us the name of the victim, Malchus. And thanks to the certainty that it was Simon Peter, the fiery Knight of Christ, we shall be better able to understand the succession of events.

First, the anger of the Master, who this time frowns in earnest:

> Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.
>
> Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Again the same struggle between the serenity of Jesus walking with the Cross and the futile optimism of Peter, trying from love of the Master to resist. But Peter remains incorrigible in his temerity. He will only be cured when the tears stream from his eyes in face of the ordained truth.

The ten, or rather nine others go to their homes. Not from fear, nor in desertion, but because they know that all must happen as the Master has told them so many times and as he has just repeated once again. Also because they are poor, honest men whose brains are free from the illusion or folly of imagining that eleven wanderers, unarmed, unknown and despised, will be able to resist the forces of the whole town.

But Simon Peter still cherishes this illusion, this folly; and in spite of all the prohibitions and predictions of Jesus, he persists in following Him, evidently trying still to strike

some blow on His behalf. Now note that if among the eleven there is one who, more than another, should go home and hide himself it is certainly he. His act of armed rebellion is not forgotten nor absolved. The guards may meet him, recognise him, arrest him. . . .

He goes all the same, accompanied by another disciple, very probably young John, who also loved his Master to the point of imprudence, and who at least has the excuse of youth.

Let us follow what is to happen in the account written by St. John, the probable eye-witness :

CHAPTER XVIII

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple : that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus unto the palace of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples ? He saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals ; for it was cold : and they warmed themselves : and Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

. . . . . .

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples ? He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him ?

27 Peter then denied again : and immediately the cock crew.

How simple it all is, how natural and human; developing along so perfect a line, conforming in every detail to the character of the man and to his generous illusions.

Simon Peter follows with the other disciple, probably John. It is night. The guards do not recognise him, so he boldly approaches the door. But the door is shut in his face. "No admittance!" Yet the other disciple, who had personal influence, follows Jesus and the soldiers into the courtyard. Simon Peter remains impatiently at the door, waiting. If he be really afraid, what a splendid opportunity to go away murmuring, "There's nothing to be done."

But no; he remains. He intends to go through with it to the end. We shall see.

The other disciple, he with personal influence, goes out and speaks to the keeper of the door. It is all like a modern scene: "This gentleman is with me." And the keeper of the door, full of respect for the man who knows the High Priest, admits the stranger starving at the door. But here lies danger. The door-keeper is by profession suspicious. She sees this provincial-looking man enter, with his obviously Galilean look and accent. And, remembering that she has orders to obey, she asks him:

"Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?"

What more natural than this question and what more natural also than the reply!

"I am not."

Could he have answered: "Yes, I am"? In that case he would have been seized, or at least turned out, and all his plans would have gone to the winds. King Clovis himself, the warrior Roland and the knightly Bayard would certainly have answered as he did:

" I am not."

For it was the only means of carrying on. A lie, true ; but, under the circumstances, an heroic lie.

What fearless and blameless Paladin, making his way into a fortress to set a prisoner free, would give way before the challenge of some sentry or obscure servant, and abandon the attempt to penetrate further?

Well, once having lied, though from necessity or at least from chivalrous impulse, what must he do to carry out his mad desire to save his Master? Persevere, alas, in the same lie, and always to the same end.

He therefore mingles with the officers and women who are warming themselves by the fire, for he too is cold. There, listening to the conversation of these people, he may perhaps learn something, find out what can be done. But his Galilean appearance and accent again betray him, and someone asks him :

" Art not thou also one of His disciples ? "

And inevitable logic forces him to repeat :

" I am not."

But then comes the most serious blow : a witness of the scene in the garden, of his attempt to kill. And this witness, by a crowning piece of ill-luck, proves to be a relative of Malchus, whose ear he has cut off. This man puts to Simon Peter a question, this time precise and circumstantial. He says :

" Did not I see thee in the garden with Him ? "

I ask frankly of any serious critic, Christian or not : what course is open to Peter in the face of this third, searching question ? Once, for reasons we have seen, he has said : "I am not." He has repeated it a second time. Is he, now that he has gained an entry, to get himself turned out, to make action impossible while nothing has yet been done ? A third time then, and for the same motive as the other two, he denies that he is the wanted man, and denies so positively that they all leave him alone and pester him no further. He, assuredly, is not conscious of having wronged his Master, for the action has been prompted by generous intentions.

But at this moment the cock crows. Peter suddenly remembers the prediction of his beloved Master. What ! Can it be true ? He has lied ! He has denied his Master ! At all events he seems to have denied Him. Then with a flash of remorse, he sees the depth of his disobedience, he recalls the reproaches of Jesus the day his Master foretold His Passion, which he, Peter, had refused to believe. He remembers the very words :

> Whither I go, ye cannot come.

He remembers the Master's severe reprimand when he struck Malchus. He has disobeyed from excess of zeal and presumption, in an attempt to resist the fulfilment of the prophesies ; and he has only succeeded in one thing : finding himself forced to deny his Master, and, alas, to no purpose.

> And the Lord turned, and looked at Peter.—St. Luke xxii. 61.

Then Peter realises it all. The tears rise to his eyes and he goes, unhindered, out of the palace to weep at the futility of his mistake and the vanity of his presumption.

To this, then, omitting nothing and adding nothing, we can reduce this famous "denial" which has been so exaggerated through the centuries by the popular imagination until it finds expression sixteen centuries later in the verses of Malherbe, quoted above.

If only sceptics like Malherbe had spoken thus it could be passed over. But Bossuet, the great generous Bossuet himself, does not hesitate to employ such strong words as "cruel denial," "criminal perfidy," "insufferable infidelity," when he says :

> ". . . How firm he is, how intrepid. He wants to die for his master ; he is incapable of deserting him. He follows him at first ; but, Oh, that first fidelity, which only serves to increase the cruelty of the denial and make more criminal the perfidy which pierces the heart of Jesus ! Ah, how deceptive is the friendship of the creature in its manifestation, corrupt in its flattery, bitter in its vacillation, overwhelming in its ill-timed help and in its opening constancy which makes the infidelity the harder to bear ! Jesus has suffered all this misery that we may detest such crimes. . . ."

Let us stop there. Where does the great Bossuet find all these horrors in the simple story of the four Evangelists ? Where is the crime of infidelity ? Where the piercing of the heart of Jesus ? True, good Simon Peter sinned, but from presumption and excess of zeal, not cowardice or perfidy. He was wrong in trying to follow Jesus, who did not want to be followed ; he was wrong in thinking he might be able to do something for the Master who desired no help ; he was wrong in lying to gain entrance

to the palace; he was wrong, in short, to disobey. Of course he was; but in this, as in other circumstances, he sinned from temerity and love, not weakness, cowardice or treachery. And nothing in the four Gospels indicates that the heart of Jesus was deeply "pierced." For He, who sees all things, saw well what was passing in the depths of Peter's soul. He contented Himself with turning and looking at the poor disciple. *Et consersus Dominus, respexit Petrum*, says St. Luke. That is all. And we can imagine that in this glance of Jesus there was sharp but paternal reproach, as in the words spoken earlier in the dramatic scene of the arrest: "Put up again thy sword into its place."

Had Jesus really thought Peter cowardly and disloyal, would He have preserved for him the affection, never refuted, which showed itself later on the banks of the Lake of Tiberias? That Peter himself should have wept throughout the rest of his life over the memory of that dreadful night is possible, and in keeping with the extreme sensibility of that splendid, crystal soul. But those who, as I am now attempting to do, will leave aside all purely religious veneration, and try to grasp the psychology of this vivid personality in his strong humanity, must recognise that in this famous scene of the Passion he was absolutely true to his character in spontaneous impulse, disinterested generosity, and unimpeachable, but sometimes unreflecting courage.

Thus we find him three days later, on Easter morning, when Mary Magdalene and the other women come to tell

the disciples that the sepulchre is empty. St. Luke says:

> And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.
>
> Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre.

Still the same impetuosity driving him to action while the others deny, doubt, or dream.

And this is how John relates the scene in greater detail:

> CHAPTER XX
>
> 3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.
>
> 4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.
>
> 5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.
>
> 6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and *went into the sepulchre.*

We see him. He never hesitates. Nor does he show any more hesitation a few days later in Galilee, when Jesus appears to the disciples as they fish along the sea of Tiberias. There is, in the picture drawn by St. John, an exquisite mingling of marvellous idealism and real human nature:

> ST. JOHN XXI
>
> 2 There were together Simon Peter and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.
>
> 3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.
>
> 4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.
>
> 5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

Simon Peter again, with his throbbing spontaneity. And what a human note of deference in the gesture: *Tunica succinxit re ferat enim nudus.*

One might have expected him to do the opposite. But no, and that is what makes the act so exquisite. He is quite willing to be naked among his companions. But in the presence of the Master he puts on his coat. This is one of those touches of truth that no poet invents. And then the good Peter throws himself into the sea, caring nought about wetting his only garment! He throws himself in as he risked himself upon the waves the night of the storm, as he hurled himself upon Malchus in the Garden of Gethsemane, as he followed headlong after his Master, despite His prohibition, on the night of the Passion. A faithful, courageous soul truly brave and good; one can well understand the Master's complete confidence in him, and also the touch of affectionate teasing in the way he makes him repeat three times: "I love thee." The third time poor Simon is quite overcome: *Contristatus est Petrus.* He has all the difficulty in the world in restraining his indignation: and yet he says to his Master:

Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.

And in this *tu omnia nosti* is the hard driven disciple's remembrance of that dreadful, to him unforgettable night when Jesus, seeing what was passing in his soul, saw clearly that his " denial " was not due to infidelity. Most of the commentators affirm that by making Peter repeat three times that he loved Him, Jesus wanted to make the first Pope of the future expiate his three successive denials. Possibly. But by repeating three times to His first disciple the order to feed His sheep, might He not rather have wished to raise him definitely in the esteem of the other disciples, and shew them that Peter's thrice repeated error on the night of the Passion in no way diminished the worth and authority of the Prince of the Apostles ?

Then why, for so many centuries, have the Christians themselves, even the greatest like Bossuet, shown themselves more severe than the Master ? What has founded and made popular and universal this stupid legend of a good-natured, easy-going St. Peter, full of excellent intentions but prudent to excess ? For this legend exists ; it is useless to pretend otherwise. No historical figure has been more stupidly distorted by popular imagination and sensibility than that of the generous Galilean fisherman. He has been made a sort of celestial porter, placidly sitting, keys in hand ; an old *bénisseur* with bushy beard, letting himself be flouted by the devil and only asking to live in peace. Now, as we have just seen, he was the very opposite of timorous. Full of good humour, it is true, but that of a strong and vivid personality, a fiery heart and quivering soul ; the good humour of our Henry IV, of the knight

Bayard, or of the Emperor Charlemagne ; a good humour that is the smile of valour. But not the sort of benevolent Father Christmas popular imagination has come to picture.

How is it possible that such a travesty of the handsome, noble face of this knightly Evangelist should have endured for century after century. For such he was from the time when he left the Lake of Tiberias to the day of the Pentecost ; and even more so after the consecration of the Pentecost when, the Master having departed, he became the chief of the apostles and gave life to the new Church. Undaunted as he was in the presence of the strong, humble and meek with the humble and meek, it is only necessary to follow him through the Acts of the Apostles and his own letters to see that his character, so human and so courageous, developed along the lines revealed to us by the four Evangelists. I will not go on with the analysis ; it would be too long and would only involve repetition. But I should like to dwell on a legend which has become universal and which, equally with the false interpretation of the "denial," has contributed to spread among the crowd this little cloud of malevolence and mockery, harmless in the case of some, malicious in that of others, that dims the glory of Simon Peter, and by reason of which the bravest of men is sometimes accused of excessive prudence, nay even of lack of courage. It is the well-known story of *Quo Vadis?* I reproduce it here as it is told in the *Légende dorée* of Jacques de Voragine.

"Now Peter, finally yielding to the supplications of his brethren, resolved to leave Rome, but when he came to one of the gates of the town, the place where now stands the church of S. Maria ad Passus,

he met Christ coming to meet him; and he said to Him: 'Lord, whither goest Thou?' And the Lord answered: 'I go to Rome to be crucified again!' And Peter said: 'Then, Lord, I will return to Rome to be crucified with Thee.' Whereupon the Lord rose again to Heaven leaving Peter in tears. And Peter, understanding that the hour of his martyrdom was at hand, returned to Rome, where he was seized by the ministers of Nero and led before the prefect Agrippa; and Lin relates that his old face was radiant with joy."

This story belongs to the series of popular and unrestrained prattle collected by the very worthy, but very ingenuous compiler of the *Légende dorée*. We must guard carefully against thinking of this charming book as another Gospel. No reliable test confirms the truth of this story of the flight of Simon Peter.

One senses in this narrative the kind of *constellation*, slowly produced by popular sentiment, which from century to century fixes itself as a legend and is finally adopted by the crowd. Recollection of the ill-understood "denial" seemed to authorise such fables. Note, moreover, that the key words of the apocryphal story, *Quo vadis, Domine?* are exactly as found in the Gospel of John, when Simon Peter, already anxious about what is to happen, asks his Master where He is going? We have a right, therefore, to mistrust this story, distorted by several centuries of popular currency. It is possible that Peter may have had a moment's hesitation when his disciples advised him to leave. He was a man, and not all of one piece like a puppet.

But what is difficult to accept is that he should have attempted flight and only been stopped on the threshold of the town by a sort of call to order from on high. Or

must we, like the opponents of Christianity, admit that he did not come to Rome? Or indeed, if we admit that he did come, can it be supposed that, in a gesture of weakness and fear, this man should have been false to the very object of his mission, which was to establish the Church on an immutable foundation? *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam.* A leaf may be driven by the wind, but not a rock.

## CHAPTER III

### PETER AND CAESAR

### I.—*From Nero to Charlemagne*

I WAS anxious to insist particularly on this splendid, striking figure of Peter, the founder of the Church; first, because in a book entitled "The Pope" it is natural to begin with the man whose name remains for ever associated with the throne from which every new pope speaks to the entire world; also, and especially, because St. Peter's soul, still so radiant in spite of a few erroneous legends, continues to vivify with its indestructible glamour that Church which ceaselessly invokes him.

It is manifest then that this magnificent idealist, this courageous man of action, has for nineteen centuries infused the influence of his own genius into the history of the Church, if only through the irresistible attraction of a name continually spoken and a memory ceaselessly extolled. Whatever may have been the vicissitudes and tribulations through which the Church has passed in weathering the storms of history; whatever may be the individual character of any pope occupying the throne consecrated in the name of Peter, the Church has never ceased to carry on the succession of Peter, the pope has never ceased, in times of crisis, to represent the ideal established by the Galilean fisherman. Now, what was and

is this ideal? . . . The exact and absolute counterpart of the representative of the Roman Empire. That is why, before pursuing further this study, or rather this broad essay dealing with the Pope's function in the world, it will be well, I think, to rid our minds of an almost universal and several-century-old fable that has come to be reiterated as an established truth; that the history of Papal Rome is the history of Imperial Rome and its natural complement.

We have called to mind already, in the second chapter, that some writers of genius, and not among the least, still believed, or had once believed, in a sort of predestined glory for Rome, because the town was the capital of the Western Empire. We have seen what reliance is to be placed on this purely literary illusion. But we have noticed at the same time that for most writers, and also for many others, if the Rome of the Caesars was to disappear in its imperial form, at least it has not disappeared completely, for the Church has succeeded it and carried on its greatness.

Taine sees in the Papacy a continuation of the pomp of Caesar "for it is indeed the Roman Empire," he says, "that endures and lives to-day." Gibbon seems convinced that Rome bore within herself a vital principle which was destined to save her under some form or other; and my friend Léon Daudet himself does not doubt that, had there been a Sylla dynasty, it would have handed on the power, "without shock," to St. Peter's successors, who would merely have had to take up the torch and carry on. But

here are the celebrated pages in which one of the historians of the Papacy throws further light on this point of view. I here quote at some length the passage in which Gregorovius describes Rome under the pontificate of Gregory the Great.

"The fall of the Gothic Kingdom marks the universal decadence of the ancient world and the ruin of Rome. . . .

"The human mind is not capable of discovering what was the state of soul of a Roman of the time of Cassiodorus and Narses, and what his heart would feel when he passed through this Rome where life had been sapped and which the spirit of ruin enveloped with his deadly breath. . . . However our excited imagination may try to picture the horror of Rome during the first period of the Byzantine domination, when the people, ravaged by famine and pestilence and ceaselessly agitated by terror of the Lombard swords, wandered wearily through the deserted streets of the dead city of the Caesars, we shall still find it impossible to conjure up the sinister picture of that dreadful night. . . .

"And in spite of this, Rome was changing like a chrysalis. . . .

"During these melancholy years, indeed, it was the Pope who alone kept vigil, who alone worked, never resting, and who raised the edifice of the Roman hierarchy.

"The gradual development of this hierarchy rising above the ruins of the ancient Roman state, amid the most formidable difficulties, justly excites the admiration of posterity, for it was the most powerful transformation in the history of mankind, and it teaches us, at the same time, what great things can be accomplished in the moral sphere by means of a systematically worked organisation and what results can be attained. The study of this great internal effort is the province of those who study the history of the Church and not of the writer of annals of the city of Rome. It will therefore be enough for us to trace the development in general terms.

"The political period of Rome closes with the fall of the Goths, who for some time still kept alive the ancient culture and civil organisation of Rome. But immediately after them we enter upon the ecclesiastical or papal period of Rome. The vital energy that still remains to the Romans is brought into the exclusive service of the Church, the *heiress of Imperial Rome*, for already enthusiasm for civil works is extinguished.

"Politically the slave of Byzantium, which continued the state of pagan Rome with all its despotic domination, the Rome of the ancients was becoming the sacred city of the Church. The spiritual power planted its standard over the ruins of Rome and enthroned itself in the shade of the wall of Aurelius. Surrounded by this wall the Church *preserved the Latin principle of the unity of Empire and the centralisation of the human race*; she preserved the civil laws of Rome and the works of Latin culture; it was there that she undertook the struggle against the Barbarians who had wrecked the Empire; she educated them in the teachings of Christianity, and at the same time attached them to Rome. *This work which, in the historical development of civilisation was confided to the Church would never have been realised if the Germanic tribes who dominated Italy had also conquered the city of Rome.* They threw themselves upon her, and even, on several occasions, with success; but Rome was always saved, so consistently that her preservation *seems almost to have been the fulfilment of some historical law.*"

In these few lines we have the most complete exposure of the error which to-day has given rise to a prejudice generally accepted; we see upon what unconscious sophistries this prejudice is founded.

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The first source of error. Indeed, to affirm as an axiom that the Church was "the heiress of Imperial Rome" is to falsify history. It is a rather puerile application of the adage, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc.* Because the Church is established in Rome and the Empire is dead, therefore the Church has inherited the Empire. It is exactly as if one were to say that the monks who founded an abbey in Capri on the site of the palace where a Roman emperor had held his orgies, could be called the heirs of Tiberius. For after all one must either write nothing or preserve the full sense

of words. What does this word heir, so often employed in this connection, really mean? It means one who, alive, receives from a dying man, his relative or friend, the complete transmission of his property, with the duty of continuing their administration after his death.

The legatee accepts everything from the legator, assets and liabilities. Between the one and the other there is agreement and solidarity, and when the heritage is not private but collective, this solidarity is greater still. A king who succeeds another king assumes all the obligations of that king and is responsible for all his liabilities. And even when a régime arising out of a revolution succeeds a vanished régime it cannot repudiate the obligations of the first. It was in this way, for example, that Napoleon declared himself bound by the whole history of France from the time of King Clovis down to the *Comité du Salut Public.*

Now where is this continuation, this succession, this solidarity to be found in what concerns the Empire and the Church; where are the assets and, especially, where are the liabilities of the Empire within the Church? Where are the provinces, armies, treasures of the Empire? Where are its pledges that the Church must recognise? Where, especially is the *solidarity*? So many words which, viewed closely, bring out the absurdity of the very idea.

It is true that the good Gregorovius, in full agreement, moreover, with the opinion current among almost all the historians and their disciples, adds that the Church, sheltered behind the Aurelian walls *preserved the Latin*

*principle of the unity of empire and the centralisation of the human race.* Now that is an even more absurd proposition than the preceding one. For the Church did not attempt to preserve anything of the Empire any more than she was its heiress. This entirely fictitious conception that the mission of Jesus's disciples, on coming to Rome, was to preserve the unity of the Empire is nothing but one of those intellectual dreams that generations pass on one to the other without ever seeing their absurdity or, if you like, their sacrilege. But apart from this special consideration the idea in itself is historically stupid.

In what, where, and how has the Church saved the unity of the Empire and its centralisation? . . . There can be no more serious confusion than to confound two unities and two centralisations so different that the one is properly the contrary of the other. The unity of the Empire was a material and political centralisation based on force and the domination of force. It consisted in the fact that provinces extending over the wide world of that time were all subservient to the same centre, dependent upon it and administrated by the mandatories of the supreme power which governed from the centre, protected by a supreme army and a supreme fleet. Now how far did the Church preserve this entirely material unity? So little that it was completely destroyed under the pontificate of the great Gregory mentioned by the German historian, while the Church showed no intention of re-establishing it. Not only was there at that time an Empire divided up into an infinite number of small sections, together with young

and distinct kingdoms growing up on all sides, but Italy itself was being divided among the victorious Barbarians.

Yes, certainly, the Church brought a new principle of unity, but it was one which had absolutely nothing in common with the principle of empire. The latter was based on material violence, on constraint and domination ; the only weapons of the other were verbal persuasion and the moral power of an ideal of love and faith. The first principle of unity, that of empire, was destined inevitably to disappear, as we saw in the second chapter of this book. The second principle of unity, that of the Word of Jesus, could not but continue to progress from century to century, for it carried within itself its own vitality. Now it has been found that the second principle—that of the ideal—began its splendid conquest at the precise historical moment when the other principle—that of imperial force—was being ruined by its own excesses, and was falling to pieces of itself. Where is the heritage of all this ? And especially how can it be said that a direct connection exists between the two ? True it is the same country and the same people descended from the same ancestors ; the very language and so many other details of daily life are the same. But in reality a new world is being born among the ruins, and Virgil's prophetic line is perhaps the only real link that exists between the inevitable and bloody twilight of the pagan Empire and the dawn of the Christian idea.

" Magnus ab integro Saeclorum nascitur ordo."

For to conclude, as Gregorovius does, and as do so many

other historians, both ancient and modern, that the conservation of Rome "seems almost to have been the fulfilment of some historical law . . . " is a sophistry whose vanity we have already shown, and which must be rejected once for all. According to all historical laws Rome had to disappear. If she has continued to live, it is because a new principle which has nothing to do with the history of republics, kings, emperors has given her fresh life. It is then a new Rome that has arisen upon that of the Caesars—the Rome of Peter—and that is the only Rome that lives to-day. The other is, morally and materially, only a heap of ruins.

The whole history of the Church indeed, even when appearances seemed to point to the contrary, is, to take a high standpoint, simply the desperate struggle of Caesar against Peter and Peter against Caesar, the first striving to regain, at every opportunity, his usurped power, the second to prevent his adversary from doing so and to secure the triumph of the idea entrusted to him. Peter represents always the word of Jesus ; Caesar the sword of Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar in all its forms. Look at the different periods from every point of view and you will always be faced with this indisputable schema. It is a struggle to the death, even when there seems to be a truce of momentary agreement. In reality the real antichrist is Caesar.

And so there can exist between Caesar and Peter no solidarity and no succession but absolute antipathy, and consequently a perpetual struggle from which Peter is destined to emerge the conqueror.

For in reality it is only Caesar who struggles ; Peter does not ; he is content to be and to persist. He resists. In vain Caesar persecutes him, threatens or flatters him, makes him suffer or render homage, robs or captures him, and even kills him. Peter succeeds Peter and the fundamental elements of the work never vary ; and, by the fact that he is unarmed, Peter for all time is invincible. The first leaps ; the second is borne on wings. The first exhausts himself by his own alternate leaps and falls ; the second is in essence invulnerable and rises from every struggle stronger than before.

This splendid struggle between Caesar and Peter, the finest epic in the world and one which still continues, begins with the madman Nero, who naturally understands nothing, and is incapable of understanding anything of the activities of Peter's companions, any more indeed than the most intelligent men of his century, beginning with the austere Tacitus, could understand them. Peter seems to be vanquished because he is jeered at by the crowd and tortured by the tormentors. But we know to-day, from the experience of so many centuries, that this kind of defeat is the most decisive of victories. The ideal then continues for several generations to be persecuted by the material ; the struggle continues under Titus, Marcus Aurelius, Domitian, Diocletian, and Heliogabalus. Caesar, more and more frenzied, tries to crush Peter, more and more glorious. But the more Peter is killed by one pope after another, the more his strength increases and the more Caesar's domination diminishes. The Empire seems still to

stand like an unshakable mass, but already on all sides breaches have opened through which new peoples penetrate.

And while the Empire marches to ruin, the Church of Peter grows prodigiously until the day when the invisible and irresistible power of the Apostle penetrates the palace of the Emperor, wins over Caesar's own mother and conquers Constantine himself! It may, perhaps, be thought that the struggle is over and that Peter and Caesar will make peace. Who knows, indeed, that Peter's successor may not for a moment have cherished this same illusion, as he must have later in the case of Charlemagne? But it was only an illusion, as the result showed. Caesar, apparently reconciled with Peter, became for the latter a more formidable enemy than before, for, instead of persecuting him, he thought to lead him. This was infinitely more dangerous. But the Roman Caesar was exhausted and slowly collapsing. The Caesar of Byzantium himself, in spite of his perfidies during reign after reign, was weakening beneath the weight of his own tribulations. Now we see Caesar reviving under other forms; for it will take him many long centuries to disappear, and perhaps even to-day he is not yet quite dead. The name of Caesar may indeed be given to any man who tries to subjugate the world by force, rule by the sword the whole world or the greatest part of it. He is Caesar, whoever tries to apply, wherever it may be, this atrocious line of the great Virgil:

"Tu regere imperio populos, Romane memento . . ."

There is no need for him to be of Roman blood or the successor of the Roman emperors; whatever his origin,

whoever his praetorians, he is Caesar, and the enemy of Peter whom he seeks now to crush, now to seduce, but whom he finds, and will always find facing him. For Peter with his Master's cross and his own, represents the exact antithesis of Caesar's standards. The latter will no longer be called Augustus or Augustulus, but he will soon be called Alaric, Genseric, Theodoric, Attila, Tatila. Followed by his hordes of young Barbarians, he, a voluptuous or cynical parvenu, will dream of dominating the west. He will pitch his camps at the very gates of Rome. He will even enter her walls. And who will stand before him? Peter, still Peter, cross in hand, the word on his lips, courage in his heart; and so sure of the future that he never fears the lowering evils of the passing hour.

And now there arises, among others, the tremendous figure of Leo I, one of the most splendid men in all the history of the world. For myself personally, I confess that it was through finding before me in Rome traces of such moral giants as this, that I began to feel the greatness of the Church and regard it with new eyes. St. Leo in the presence of Attila, Attila in the presence of St. Leo; what a page! . . . And later St. Leo in the presence of Genseric! And this happened in the middle of the fifth century, when that glorious and wicked ancient world was crumbling on all sides. But Leo represents something more than these pages of splendid heroism recorded by history; there are also beautiful pages written by himself which have become classics throughout the Church and bear brilliant testimony to the ever fecund union of word and deed. This is

what Peter had become after four centuries of struggle, when the Caesars of Rome were falling into depths of abjectness and the other Caesars were merely passing by.

The struggle continued, for Caesar was ever returning to the assault in some fresh incarnation. Once more, as in the time of Constantine, the Church was to think for a moment that she had won the final victory and that christian peace would replace imperial war. It was Gregory the Great who was the cause of this fresh illusion. On a like scale with Leo I, one of those really superhuman beings of which the Church alone has produced a few during her long history, Gregory performed the historical miracle of saving Rome, or rather transforming the perishable Rome of the tribunes and the Caesars into that Rome, henceforward imperishable, of the successors of Peter. It was not a continuation, it was a complete reconstruction on a new plan. He was responsible for the organic consolidation of that eternal Rome founded by Peter. For henceforward the other Rome was dead. But if Caesar was no longer in Rome, he was far from being conquered yet. For many centuries he was to prowl around her, always threatening, always awaiting his opportunity to recapture his prey.

He was to prowl especially under his new form of the Byzantine emperor who called himself the heir of the Roman emperors and consequently master of the city that Gregory had saved, and which, but for the genius of Peter's successors, would now be nothing but a ruin. But the Caesar of Byzantium proclaimed her his property and sought to subject the Pope to his domination. This

resistance of Peter to the Caesar of the East lasted a hundred years, becoming particularly severe under the papacy of Gregory II and Gregory III against Leo the Isaurian and Constantine Capronymus. For fifty years more the struggle was maintained with the same vigour against the successors of the Isaurian and their enemies the Lombards, who in their turn dreamed of ruling Italy.

Finally came Pepin and Charlemagne on the one side, and, on the other, the two Popes Adrian I and Leo III ; and it seemed that a new era was about to open for the Church and for the world. Indeed something new was occurring in the history of the Church : almost a century of peace, and her temporal security henceforward sheltered from the fluctuation that surrounded her.

Let us pause for a moment at this stretch of nearly half a century from the accession of the great Adrian to the death of the great Pope Leo III.

At first sight it seems as if these two glorious reigns of the successors of Peter, concurrent with the equally glorious reigns of the two new Caesars, Pepin and Charlemagne, are in flat contradiction to the thesis I have developed in this chapter : the perpetual resistance of Peter to Caesar. We shall see that it was nothing of the sort and that, on the contrary, this apparent contradiction finally furnished decisive and, henceforward uninterrupted proofs to the history of this very struggle.

Two great things then became established in the course of these few centuries : the temporal State of the Holy See ;

the creation of the Holy Roman Empire. The first was a boon, the second a calamity.

That the solidification of the temporal power of the Pope, as realised by Pepin and Charlemagne, has been a benefit to the Papacy and the world it is impossible not to admit to-day, unless one is blinded by party spirit. That great Ghibeline, Dante, was never reconciled to it and has scourged this power in so many verses, burning like molten gold, that many minds in Italy and elsewhere have long preserved the impression of these immortal diatribes. But though Dante is a great poet; perhaps—with Virgil—the greatest poet of the west, we must not forget that he remained all his life a partisan and poured into his work, not only local passions but also personal hatred. With such a soul one may become a formidable and splendid poet and remain a very bad judge of matters of history. And thus he was, in spite of all his genius.

But we, watching henceforth the unrolling of the centuries of the past from the vantage point of the new world, so different from that of the Middle Ages, ought to recognise that, in the state in which Europe found herself before, during, and after the eighth century, it was necessary to give to the successors of Peter temporal and material security for the free accomplishment of their idealistic mission. One of two things had to be. Rome and the surrounding provinces had to belong either to the Pope or to another power. They could not remain *res nullius*. But if the Pope had not possessed them who would have been their master? A Byzantine emperor? a Lombard king? a

Frankish king? The Church and Peter, given the customs of those times, would have been condemned either to revolt or submission. It would have meant handing over Peter to the eventual menace of a new Nero. A pope in Rome at a time of medieval barbarity, with an emperor or king in the same town, or even a simple tribune of the people, would have made Peter the servant of Caesar, which would have been the very negation of Peter's mission. Constantine understood this so well that, after his conversion, he judged it well to withdraw from Rome and transfer the seat of the Empire elsewhere. It has since been seen how inadequate this guarantee was for, at every opportunity and from every side, Caesar returned to the assault. The beneficent work of Gregory himself had not put his successors out of danger.

There was then only one way to assure to Peter the free exercise of his mission, and that was to make him independent; and the only way to make him independent was to give him absolute possession of the territory in the centre of which he had established his See. Now in the middle of the Middle Ages there was constant and continual conflict between kingdom and kingdom. It was therefore essential that Peter, in order to be free, should become in turn king of his own domain. And so was inevitably created the Pope-King. If anyone can find another solution to this historical problem, let him state it. No one yet has done so. The famous Temporal Power was then, and has remained, a simple but inevitable guarantee of independence and in no way a terrestrial power comparable

with the other kingdoms and empires which were struggling for world power. Literally and by the standard of material space, this king of Rome was a minor king of no importance at all, far inferior to the kings of Naples and Sicily, the dukes of Milan, and the doges of Venice. Those, therefore, who imagine that the successor of Peter also succeeded Caesar by the simple fact that he became king of Rome are making a gross mistake of reckoning which any child to-day could rectify. A magnificent Caesar indeed, whose domain on one side did not reach the Arno and on the other the Vulturnum!

If any Pope ever dreamed of temporal expansion it was only during the agitations of the Renaissance, when the Barbarians were struggling for the possession of Italy, and when the kings of Rome could contribute to save her. In fact there were only two who toyed with this evil dream; and in the case of one of these it was not himself but his son, who called himself Caesar. As for the other, the nevertheless admirable Julian Della Rovere, it is quite clear that, when he contemplated uniting the whole of Italy under his sceptre, he was thinking less of the terrestrial glory of Peter than of the freedom of his country, trampled under foot by so many conquerors. Peter was mistaken of course. But his mistake was, like that in the Garden of Olives when he cut off the ear of the insolent Malchus, due to excess of courage and impulsiveness.

Peter, then, has never governed more than a quite small state. If he had not been the Pope he would have counted for nothing in history. His strength, even in the time of

Julius II, never depended on his few soldiers and acres of land, but on the ideal he represented. Even when he drew the sword it was always as Peter and never as Caesar. It may be understood then that the Popes Adrian I and Leo III, admirable administrators and leaders of the Church, should have continued to feel deep gratitude to Pepin and Charlemagne for having given to the spiritual throne of Peter that firm foothold on the soil of Rome that constituted temporal power. Those two great shepherds of the Catholic flock knew too well what the Church had to fear from the rapacious conquerors in quest of thrones and territory, not to understand to what extent the dignity and independence of Peter would gain by this gift from Caesar.

And it was assuredly out of this very natural gratitude that the idea was born of founding the Holy Roman Empire, a terrible exchange ! It was Peter's gravest political error for twenty centuries and he was to expiate it dearly. But it explains itself, if one goes back to the period, and was even inevitable. The idea that Western Europe could live without dominating or protecting the small surrounding kingdoms could not yet have occurred to the brain of a mortal born in the time of the last Merovingian and Lombard kings and the successors of Leo Iconoclastes.

Now, from the moment that the existence of an Empire became inevitable, it was as well, that it should be under the protection of the Church, and even in her service as her secular champion and protector. It was better still that it should have at its head the noble Charles,

the Deliverer, *romanae ecclesiae ensis clypeusque.* Thus reasoned the two great Popes Adrian I and Leo III and their successors ; and we must agree that, given the period, it was impossible for them to reason otherwise.

It was a mistake, however, if not in the light of the relative and immediate, at least in that of the absolute and eternal. Peter was making another mistake in spite of his ardent genius, and perhaps because of it, just as he had made a mistake on the night of the Passion when, in spite of the orders of Jesus, he followed Him to the palace of Caiaphas, though it were to save Him. And once more, as on that famous night, he appeared to be denying his Master although in reality he was under the illusion that he was working for Him. There is absolute incompatibility, whatever the ephemeral reasons, between the word of Jesus, of which Peter is the depository, and the sword of Caesar, even when wielded by Charlemagne. *Mitte gladium tuum in vaginam.* And every time that Peter uses the sword, or causes it to be used, he repeats the mistake of the Garden of Olives. Every time he forces himself to replace it in its sheath he follows the path of his Master. There, I believe, lies the fundamental truth.

Now, by creating the Empire, for any reason whatsoever, Peter, whether he willed or not, was exalting Caesar and the sword, and was creating for himself the most redoubtable of enemies ; for, even though Charlemagne was that admirable handler of men, severe towards the evil, gentle with the good, whom the Church has exalted *romanae ecclesiae ensis clypeusque* ; even if he was, as history teaches us,

humble of heart before the Church and her sincere and submissive son, there was nothing to prove that his descendants and successors would be like him. The whole of history demonstrates, on the contrary, that the heirs of a great man, strong and powerful, always tend to abuse the power and strength which he bequeaths to them. So, by establishing the Holy Empire upon the virtues of Charlemagne, Peter was delivering Peter to the inevitable cupidity of the future Caesars. For if the successor of Peter is constrained by his very mission to model himself more or less on Peter, the successor of Caesar cannot avoid resembling Caesar. And for one Charlemagne in history there are all the others who have appeared and will appear.

### 2—*From Charlemagne to Frederick II*

The popes who were to reign in Rome after Adrian I and Leo III had to expiate copiously the innocent mistake of these two great men. And, let us add, they had to redeem it by the struggles, martyrdoms, and superhuman efforts of several of them. Once more Peter was to rise stronger from his involuntary denial.

The struggle, ever becoming more and more tragic, was to begin once more between Caesar and Peter. Not immediately after the death of Charlemagne, for the immediate successors of the great emperor seem to have been still under the binding spell of his work. For nearly a whole century, down to the pontificate of Leo IV, Rome and her popes enjoyed peace, at home and abroad, and the city was born again out of her ashes.

But then came the terrible tenth century, the blackest perhaps in all western history, when unhappy Rome and the unhappy Papacy were battered by all the hurricanes of war, revolt, massacre, and turpitude which for more than a hundred years seemed to justify the universal expectation of the end of the world. That the Papacy should have survived unbroken this age of iron, blood, and mire is doubtless its greatest miracle and the strongest testimony that nothing within or without could henceforward bring it down. But with the close of the year 1000 we seem to breathe again. It is only to struggle later over wider battlefields, for Caesar had recovered all his strength, all his ambition and all his pride.

And now begins the great struggle, known to every one, between the Emperor and the Pope. The dynasty of Charlemagne had died out a century before and the orb of the Holy Roman Empire—whose name henceforward remained ineffaceable—had passed into the hands of the German Caesars, tumultuous and ambitious by nature, whose perpetual dream it was to reach Rome and there reign. I shall not linger to retrace the details of this magnificent epic even rapidly. Who does not know it? Under the title of "War of the Guelphs and Ghibelines," and other names, this epic is related in all the history manuals of three continents. But what the manuals of all languages leave out and dare not say is that this struggle, which lasted for several centuries and perhaps is not yet finished, was infinitely more spiritual than temporal, despite the picturesque exterior which first strikes the

human brain. It was precisely the same struggle as that waged by Peter against Nero; or rather Nero against Peter, for Peter did not seek, and never seeks, anything but peace; it is Caesar who forces him to submit to war. And it is beyond doubt in this vast struggle that the words of Jesus, "I am not come to bring peace but a sword," are fulfilled. For there can indeed be no final peace until Caesar is conquered for ever. But how this war differs on the two sides! On the one the sword, threats, havoc, "prepotence," fire and blasphemy; on the other a single man replying by the divine word, by the excommunication of sacrilege, the appeal to the faithful, and the will to suffer.

And what heroes were here revealed! Greater than in any purely human epic. So great that, without wishing to enter the mystic sanctuary of this story, it is impossible to understand their greatness without admitting that there was in them something divine.

Gregory VII, Adrian IV, Alexander III, Gregory IX, Innocent IV, Sixtus-Quintus, Innocent XI, and, nearer to our own time, those two immaculate incarnations of the first Peter, Pius VII and Pius X, the two purest martyrs to the unchanging Caesar. And I only quote the most illustrious; those whom the flames of the blazing struggle have lit up most brilliantly before the eyes of men. But among those whom glory has touched more lightly, humble plebeians or great patricians raised to the throne of the Apostle, how many has splendid conquest exalted from time to time to the sublimity of heroes or saints. No doubt

there have been among the mass many unworthy popes, but Peter has quickly redeemed Peter. In what dynasty, of no matter what reign, can be found a succession of courageous and splendid beings to equal these whom profane history itself acclaims as the torches of humanity?

Gregory VII for example; who among the kings of France and all the emperors of East and West can be compared with him? Read again, in the work of no matter what historian, what Rome was during the whole century preceding the rise of the monk Hildebrand. However intimately acquainted one may be with subsequent events one is astounded, reading these sinister annals, that the Papacy could have survived such falls; and this again is the greatest proof of its superhuman destiny. Rome a prey to the cruellest faction: feudal bullies keeping the field and trying to impose their "prepotence" on the Vicar of Christ; grotesque and bloody tribunes claiming to re-establish the Republic of the Gracchi; simoniacal and debauched bishops and cardinals; anti-popes, nominated by the factions, disputing the tiara with the successor of Peter; battles in the street and at the very gates of the Pope's palace; two Popes in Rome, one at S. Angelo, the other at the Lateran; and, dominating all this tumult of red passion, the Emperor, the eternal Caesar from Otho to Henry IV, proclaiming himself master of Rome and suzerain of the Holy See, nominating the bishops, and pushing pride to the point of demanding himself to choose and confirm the representative of God.

The times of Nero, Domitian and Caracalla offer less

painful annals of the struggle between Caesar and Peter; for at the time of the first Roman Emperors the situation was clear. There were on one side the persecutors and on the other the martyrs, and the inevitable victory was to the glory of the latter. In the time of the German Emperors, on the other hand, the horror of the unchained beast was as formidable and still bloodier, and in addition there were signs of confusion within the persecuted Church. For, around the first popes, Peter, Lin, Clement, Sixtus, Calixtus, and the others all the Christians in Rome were knit together in an indivisible phalanx, but in the tenth and eleventh centuries it was within the ranks of Peter that falterings and treachery were most common. Bishops and cardinals made themselves the agents of Caesar; false popes consented to reign in his name, and, alas, real popes also submitted for a time to the yoke of the eternal Antichrist.

Then arose an obscure monk of humble origin, the son of a carpenter like Jesus, and brought up by charity in the silence of a Roman convent. His name was Hildebrand. Amid the wealthy feudal dignitaries, who alone counted in the society of his century, he was nothing, less than nothing. A petty monk whom the great barons and mitred abbots had the right to treat as an insignificant serf. But this petty monk bore within him a great heart and a great brain. While still young he saw the evils which were crashing round the head of the Church, understood them, and suffered from them; and, while reading the Gospels, he dreamt of a new St. Peter and a new St. Paul who would

come to save her. But, while waiting for the supernatural appearance of these two deliverers, why should not he himself, in his humble sphere, try to cauterise some of the evils he saw festering around him? And so this little monk, austere and full of energy, began ardently to study, pray and act. His genius became so soon manifest to his fellows that, while still young, he became Abbot of Cluny and, in less than forty years, Abbot of St. Paul's, near Rome, whence he exerted his irresistible influence directly upon the six popes who followed, from Leo IX to Alexander II. A true secretary of state, as he would be called to-day, this rude monk helped the feeble pontiff whose counsellor he was to resist the scourges that threatened him: feudal bullies; a coarse and inconstant people; unworthy, grasping prelates supported by the dukes, kings, and emperors; northern plunderers and other barbarians prowling round Rome; anti-popes raised by Caesar; and, last and most important, Caesar himself, still the enemy, still the lurking persecutor.

This quarter of a century preceding the elevation of Hildebrand to the throne of St. Peter is as red and black as a play of Shakespeare. The chroniclers assure us that at that time Macbeth, the tragic King of Scotland, came to Rome to beg of the Pope absolution for his sins, and, in penitence, scattered his alms among the poor of the town. In truth he is not out of harmony with his surroundings, and who knows even but that his poor little ambition of a barbarian minor king did not seem to him a very slight crime compared with the torrents of blood and orgy which besmirched the very steps of the papal throne.

Hildebrand, still impotent, had to watch this onslaught of the beast against the spirit. Intrepid and calm before the reddened storm, he roused the courage of the legitimate pontiffs against the usurpers hurled into Rome by Caesar ; and in the thick of the tumult he promulgated a decree concerning the election of popes which is a veritable moral challenge of the material predominance of the emperors and which still endures to-day. Finally, after having twice witnessed bloody struggles in the streets of Rome between the defenders of the Pope Alexander II and the paid bands of Caesar upholding the anti-pope Honorius, he himself, summoned by the wish of a Christianity desirous of peace, mounted the throne of Peter which for twenty-five years he contributed so powerfully to save.

And so Hildebrand became Gregory VII ; a tremendous reign which would appear fabulous were its record not preserved in the irrefutable documents of written history. This son of a carpenter, this little nameless monk, this studious, thoughtful abbot rose suddenly against the most powerful king in the world and finally crushed him. Nor did he reign without danger and opposition over an obedient and faithful town. No : in Rome itself every day was a struggle and sometimes a crisis. A feudal boor, Censius, came to seize him by the hair at the very altar of S. Maria Maggiore, and, in the name of the Emperor, imprisoned him in one of those towers in the neighbourhood of Rome where the Roman barons were already leading that bandits' life which later made their names illustrious. By sheer moral force he quickly subdued the Emperor. Yes, doubtless he was a great politician, who knew how to

use his influence to win over to his side powerful temporal support, like that of the Normans to the south of Rome and Countess Matilda in Tuscany. But the official historians, always preoccupied with human comparisons, have insisted too much on the political worth of Gregory and have thought that all there was to say on this subject had been said when they compared his name with that of Julius Caesar, Charlemagne or Napoleon. Indeed, with a genius like that of Gregory, the human and political victories he won, in such forms as alliances, were only temporal, though necessary means towards an infinitely higher work. His real power is not to be seen either in the oscillating fidelity of Robert the Guiscard, or even in the very sincere admiration of the great Matilda ; it is his own purely Christian genius and his consciousness that he was the Vicar of God. It was an entirely moral force.

When he became Pope this ex-monk had already spent fifty years meditating upon the mission of St. Peter and his spiritual supremacy. There emanated from him a sort of solar radiance so powerful as to penetrate all the nations, just as it had penetrated, in spite of themselves perhaps, the six or seven popes whom he had supported and led. It was enough for him to speak aloud to the world for the world to feel that his voice dominated all other earthly sounds. It was in vain that poor Henry IV raised learned anti-popes, like Gilbert of Ravenna, and convoked councils to depose " the false monk Hildebrand " ; the monk Hildebrand, in spite of all, spoke the eternal language and it was to him that Christianity listened, trembling. And when, raised to the apex of his moral greatness, he hurled anathema at

Caesar, it was useless for Caesar to struggle ; it was the ex-monk who prevailed.

Then occurred that titanic scene, the most symbolic, perhaps, since the drama of Golgotha. An Emperor—the successor of Otto, Charlemagne, Constantine, Nero, Augustus ; the predecessor of Barbarossa, Charles V, and Napoleon ; in fact Caesar himself—struck down by the excommunication of Peter, was seen wandering from town to town, begging in vain for the succour the nations refused him and finally coming, barefoot and in his shirt, to the fortress where the Pope awaited him and outside which he passed three nights and three days in the snow, begging Peter to receive him.

What splendid scenes and what colour !

This emperor, smitten by the word of the Pope, had had to leave his residency, driven to penitence by the peoples themselves, who were ready to refuse him obedience unless he obtained the pardon of the Sovereign Pontiff. There he was, prowling in mid-winter over the German roads on the way from France to Italy, shunned by the pilgrims, who stood aside lest they should be besmirched by contact with him. He crossed the Alps on foot in the face of the winter storms, surrounded by enemies watching for him and false friends who made him pay dearly for the hospitality they offered as he passed. And stage by stage, his terror increasing as he approached, he came to the fortress of Canossa, the forbidding castle of Princess Matilda of Tuscany. And it was not until the fourth morning that the Pope condescended to receive and absolve the emperor who knelt before him.

That miracle of Canossa ! That 18th of January, 1077,

when Caesar, humiliated and in tears, kissed the feet of Peter, marks for all really free minds, to whatever religion they may belong, the most magnificent date of our terrestrial epic. The man who gave to future centuries this eternal comforting vision will one day be regarded as one of the most splendid conquerors that the earth has produced. For, beside the perpetual victory of Canossa, what are Salamis, Pharsalus and Bouvines, Marignano and Pavia, Saint-Quentin and Rocroi, Austerlitz and Waterloo and all such ephemeral victories which successive tempests have already obliterated, yet in which the vanity of empires, vanished or foredoomed to vanish, still finds occasional food for pride? Canossa, the dazzling apex upon which none can look without trembling with a joy as deep as destiny itself; Canossa, a formidable name which, when humanity understands its real story, shall become one of the most glorious of human history; Canossa, the triumph of the ideal; Canossa, where Calvary was avenged!

Thenceforward indeed, whatever may happen, Peter triumphs and Caesar is crushed. From time to time Caesar will seem to rise again, but the brand of Canossa for ever marks his forehead. And, even in his short-lived victories, when he rides into Bologna or Rome with his laurels and his purple, men will always see again the dishevelled head and bare feet of Henry IV, begging for grace in the snow and mud. And, whatever momentary humiliation Peter may still have to undergo, he will never forget the crowning gesture of the old monk when he left to weep before his closed gate the begrimed figure of humiliated Caesar!

Hardly was the beast unchained than he tried to avenge itself upon the Spirit, and Caesar once more took up the struggle. After a century of new troubles and ever reviving schisms he swept down on Italy to the blare of his victorious trumpets under the name of Frederick Barbarossa. Cleverer than the ill-starred Henry IV, and more powerful, it certainly looked as though he would throw down Peter and avenge Canossa. But Peter was again a plebeian; this time a man of English origin turned monk and finally, from sheer capacity, made Prior of a convent near Arles, whence Pope Eugene III, attracted by his great qualities, brought him to Rome to make him cardinal. A rude champion, like Hildebrand; and if not as energetic, at least as pious, wise and courageous, he became Pope under the name of Adrian IV. Like Gregory VII, his great prototype, he found Rome in a state of anarchy, inflamed by the rebellious words of Arnaud of Brescia and divided into rival factions; some championing the Republic, others the Empire and others William of Sicily. What a splendid prize to tempt the ambition of Barbarossa, one of the most ambitious of the line of Caesars! How easy it would be to crush Caesar between so many enemies; all the more so as the successor of Peter was a very insignificant king in Rome, his realm reduced to little more than the Leonine City, and more a prisoner than a sovereign. But what mattered the domain? He was Peter and he had the Word; and Caesar was to find it so.

Upon the first arrival of the Emperor in Rome there occurred that famous scene near Nepi, when, in spite of the

terror of his cardinals and the insolence of the imperial armies, Adrian IV forced Barbarossa to hold the reins of his mule. What silly statements have been written on this subject by historians who never see beyond the facts and do not understand the symbols! Gregorovius, for example, is left quite breathless by it. This former beggar from an English village presuming to make an equerry of a German emperor: what presumption, what an infraction of Christian humility! These poor creatures do not see that in such a struggle as that between Caesar and Peter every symbolic victory has its deep significance, and that, in exacting from Barbarossa this public act of submission, Adrian IV is not thinking of him but of the Church, still threatened by the powerful Antichrist. The successor of Gregory VII, from the simple fact that he had courage, could not bow before the successor of Henry IV. Canossa commanded! And Barbarossa, gnawing his suppressed anger, consented to hold the papal reins. It was for hardly more than a few minutes, the historian says. What matter! The gesture was sufficient, however brief.

But the Emperor did not renounce his idea of making himself master of Rome and, shortly after, he instigated a series of schisms which troubled the reigns of Adrian's successors. Meanwhile the soul of Peter had been transmitted from one pope to another; a new pope of genius and faith arose against Barbarossa. Outwardly Alexander III was a poor old man who seemed to possess but a breath of life and a mere fragment of terrestrial power. He wandered from town to town, gradually hunted down by the implacable

hatred of Caesar whilst an anti-pope reigned in Rome, supported, naturally, by the band of feudal brigands. But this old man suddenly showed himself a resolute champion of the Holy See. He was of the line of Leo the Great and Gregory VII. He resisted Barbarossa as the two others had resisted Attila and Henry IV, and his reign became one of the most splendid in the history of the Church. In vain did Caesar convoke councils of perverse prelates in which the true Pope was declared a usurper. In vain did he besiege and capture Rome. The true Pope, unafraid, spoke to Christianity with the voice of Peter; he anathematised the Emperor and throughout the north of Italy the old spirit of liberty that animated the Lombard cities awoke to the voice of the Pontiff and rose against the threatening foreigner. At the very moment when Barbarossa thought himself master of the peninsula, he saw rise before him the improvised armies of the Lombard leagues, and the dazzling victory of Legnano, one of the most glorious in Italian history, drove Caesar beyond the Alps while Peter re-entered Rome in triumph.

But the battle was not over. It was reopened by Frederick I under the successors of the great Alexander III and was then continuously waged for fifty years by the Emperors against the Popes with incessant alternations of religious schisms and feudal conspiracies, until there appeared in the throne of Caesar one of the most formidable enemies the Church has had to face, one who mingled with the courage of the medieval warrior all the genius of a political herald of the modern age.

This was Frederick II, a lettered sovereign, an able poet, brought up in the love of Italian soil, and so deeply intrigued by the peninsula that he declared his readiness to renounce all his German domains if he might become absolute sovereign of Italy and Emperor of Rome, to reign there over the subjugated world as Augustus and Marcus Aurelius, whom he took as his models and sources of inspiration, had reigned of old. A very dangerous enemy, for he shunned violence and veiled his ambition under plans apparently conciliatory and pacific. At first his only desire was to be the friend of Peter, his knight and defender; and to show his good faith he started, lance in hand, for the crusades. But this adventure in the fascinating orient only swelled the ambitious designs of the poet Caesar. Surrounded by scribes, lawyers, troubadours and warriors he initiated against the Pope an incessant and many sided struggle in which battles alternate with pamphlets, excommunications with judicial discussions. This seems to have exhausted the strength of three popes and the redoubtable Emperor already had appeared as a conqueror at the gates of Rome, when there arose once more one of those Pontiffs with souls of fire before whom, by a sort of predestination so many centuries old, the Attilas had been condemned to recoil. Innocent IV rose against Frederick II.

Threatened, deprived of all succour, even driven from the Eternal City, Innocent IV was forced to take refuge in Lyons. But he had behind him the strength of the Word. He appealed against the usurping Caesar to all the other

kings of the earth and convoked at Lyons the third Oecumenic Council, at which Frederick was excommunicated for violation of his oath, sacrilege, and heresy. Frederick, however, did not submit, and replied to the Pope in letters which he, in his turn, addressed to the kings of the west, letters which had been written by his secretary, Pierre des Vignes. In these he brought into question the power of the Pope over crowned heads, hoping thus to associate the other monarchs with himself. And indeed, the other kings of the world, hesitating, did not dare to come to the help of the Pope; even Louis IX contenting himself with a vain attempt at conciliation. Yet it was the Pope who emerged triumphant. The Emperor had on his side all the ambitious feudal bandits rallied under the banner of the Ghibelines; but the Pope had behind him, against the foreigner, the instinct for liberty of the Guelph communes.

The Emperor at first seemed to carry the day; so much so that he prepared to cross the Western Alps and hurl himself with his troops against Lyons, where the Pope had found asylum. But the brave Guelph cities rose and one of them, Parma, inflicted upon Frederick II and his troops a defeat analogous to that of Legnano, which had shattered the fortunes of Frederick Barbarossa. Once more Peter's tenacity triumphed over the insolence of Caesar. The once omnipotent Frederick died broken, conquered, melancholy and repentant; Innocent IV, who had been spoiled, hunted, driven into exile, returned to Italy amid rejoicing and acclamation.

A few years later the race of the Hohenstaufen disappeared from history, while the successors of Innocent took up again their mission in the Eternal City.

### 3.—*Dante*

Let us pause for a moment at this culminating point of the Roman epic. As with the time of Constantine, and that of Charlemagne, we are passing from one age to another, and a great trial has come to an end.

Caesar, in the most truly imperial form that had distinguished him for a thousand years and more, was vanquished and, one may believe, vanquished for all time, since his very race seemed extirpated from history. Caesar is as multiform as Proteus. He had already during twelve centuries changed his race and throne more than a dozen times, and he was to rise again in what was doubtless the most unexpected fashion, for he had not renounced, nor could he renounce, the subjugation of his substantial enemy Peter, the apostle of the Word. But meanwhile let us cast a bird's eye glance over the long stage traversed by Peter's activity, and try to understand the state of Christian minds in the midst of these formidable tribulations.

What at a first glance strikes us, who have reached a new point in history and for whom the passions of the Middle Ages are as strange as those of Rameses, is that there should have been found during several centuries so many Christians, and doubtless good Christians, ready to take the side of Caesar against Peter in this battle in

which the Word of Jesus Himself seemed involved. It is very true that the living always move amid the smoke of surrounding passions which prevent them from seeing clearly the perspective of the future. And perhaps it is necessary that it should be thus. For if it were not so humanity would vegetate without struggle, and perhaps without vitality. But it is truly amazing, now, to think that only six hundred years ago so many Christians, and often the most influential, should still have understood so little the true mission of the Pope on earth. Who knows, indeed, whether all the popes of that time themselves fully understood it? But of all the surprises that still remain to us to-day the most overwhelming is that furnished by Dante both in his life and in his works.

I hope that it will occur to no one to believe that I want to diminish the glory of the great Florentine. Those who have done me the honour to read some pages of a book that I recently published under the name of *Mauvais Maîtres* know what unrestrained admiration I have for this man whom, with Virgil, I believe to be the greatest poet of the west. But however great may be the author of the *Inferno*, he allowed himself to be swayed, in all sincerity and without baseness, by the tumult of passions which raged around him. It was doubtless the very energy and ardour of the passions which inspired him that gave his poetry such splendour of blood and fire. As for his patriotism for Italy, even more than for Florence, ever to doubt it would be folly and sacrilege. He had the intuition, and even more perhaps the instinct, of what his country would one day become,

and in the influence which he exercised, and still exercises, over his people there is something of quasi-mystic unconsciousness. It may be said of him that what he did by the secret force of his genius is much finer than what he did deliberately. For after all we must not forget that what he wanted to do was to bring back Caesar to Rome and give him " the Garden of the Empire."

" Abi gente che dovresti esser devota,
E lasciar seder Cesare in la sella,
Se bene intendi ciò che Dio ti nota,

Guarda come esta fiera è fatta fella
Per non esser corretta da li sproni,
Poi che ponesti mano alla predella.

O Alberts tedesco ch'abbandoni
Costei ch'è fatta indomita e selvaggia,
E dovresti inforcar li suoi arcioni,

Guisto guidicio da le stelle caggia
Sovra'l tuo sangue, e sia nuovo e aperto,
Tal che'l tuo successor Temenza n'aggia !

Ch'avete tu e'l tuo padre sofferto,
Per cupidizia di costa distretti,
Che'l giardin de lo imperis sin diserto.

Vieni a veder Montecchi e Cappelletti,
Monaldi e Filippeschi, nom sanza cura :
Color già tristi é cuesti son sospetti !

Vien, crudel, vieni, e vedi la pressura
Dè tuoi gentili e cura lor magagne ;
E vedroi Santafior com'è oscura !

Vieni a veder la tua Roma che piagne
Vedova e sola e ch'e notte chiama :
' Cesare mio, perchè non m'accompagne ? ' "

(*Purg.*, cant. vi.)

"Ah people, that shouldest be obedient, and let Caesar sit in the saddle, if well thou understandest what God writeth to thee.

See how this beast hath grown vicious, for not being corrected by the spurs, since thou hast put thy hand to the bridle.

O German Albert, that dost forsake her who is become wanton and savage, and that oughtest to bestride her saddle-bow,

may just judgment fall from the stars upon thy blood, and be it strange and manifest, so that thy successor may have fear thereof:

for thou and thy father, held back yonder by covetousness, have suffered that the garden of the empire be laid waste.

Come and see Montagues and Capulets, Monaldi and Filippeschi, thou man without care: those already sad, and these in dread.

Come, cruel one, come, and see the oppression of thy nobles and tend their sores, and thou shalt see Santafior how secure it is.

Come and see thy Rome that weepeth widowed and alone, and day and night doth cry: 'Caesar mine, wherefore dost thou not companion me?'"[1]

"Oh, my Caesar, why art thou not with me?" But what an accent for a master of "Italianism"! Obviously at the beginning of the fourteenth century it was the cry of a great patriot; but nevertheless it is permissible, without profaning Italian patriotism, to prefer to this appeal to a foreign Caesar the songs of liberty chanted by those who, mounted on their glorious "Carroccio," rode off to Legnano to drive out of Italy the man whom Dante dares to call "il buon Federico"; and one may also prefer the obscure citizens who fell under the walls of Parma holding back Frederick II. It is then clear that simply from

[1] This, and the subsequent translations of Dante, are quoted from the English version of J. A. Carlyle (A. C.).

the point of view of Italian patriotism, Dante's passions, however ardent and sincere they may have been, did not produce infallible judgments.

And this conception of Italy as a "garden of the empire," peaceably flowering in the sunshine, writing verses, humming songs, painting frescoes and carving caryatids, was, alas, realised some centuries later after the "beneficent" sacking of Rome by Charles V, to which we shall refer presently. This cost Italy three hundred years and more of decadence, servitude, and abasement, from which she was raised again by the heroic *Risorgimento*. And those who really love this prodigious country are right in crying with Carducci against Dante himself:

> "Odio il tuo santo impero; e la corona
> Divelto con la spada avrei di testa
> Al tuo buon Federico in val d'Olona."[1]

Let us then pass over Dante's patriotism and consider his Christianity and his conception of the Papacy, the only thing which interests us in this work. Here, I confess, my surprise gives place to bewilderment. In politics all tendencies are permissible, and even all errors, provided that they are made in good faith and are free from the bait of sordid interest. That Dante should have thought that a universal empire, governed even by a foreigner, was better for his people than the liberty of the inhabitants, was his right, and perhaps he knew better than his contemporary enemies. But that he should push his political

[1] "I hate thy holy empire; and in the Val d'Oloba I should with my sword have smitten off the crown of thy 'good Frederick.'"

ardour to the point of exalting Caesar as against Peter; and even go so far as to declare, as he did in his treatise *De Monarchia*, that the empire was of divine essence and that Jesus himself had consecrated its legitimacy, is more serious, proving as it does that this great theologian poet had not yet discovered the divine essence of Christianity, and that he had not completely understood Peter's mission nor even the Word of Christ.

The reasons for which, according to Dante, Jesus Himself sanctified the Empire are literally dumbfounding. They surpass in incoherence the theories as to the eternity of human Rome which we have examined in the second chapter in connection with Goethe, Gibbon, Taine, and especially Nietzsche. How true it is that human passion is a dense smoke blinding even the greatest geniuses. Dante, without moving an eyelid, affirms that Caesar should govern the whole world and reign in Rome by the will and judgment of God. And why? Because of the coming of Aeneas, because of the "legitimate conquest" of the world; *because Christ was born on Roman soil under the reign of Caesar Augustus; because he died under Pontius Pilate, pro-consul of Rome; because he chose for his birth and death on earth the greatest era of peace realised by the Caesars.* One might be dreaming as one reads these mystico-literary aberrations. Nietzsche himself is somewhat less a Caesaro-maniac, and he at least is not a theologian.

Is it credible that Dante was really a heretic and a secret enemy of the Church, as some have affirmed during his life and up to the present day? We know that

the Protestants, for example, have always had a very natural tendency to include in their ranks a great number of those who preceded them in history, including even the most venerated saints of the Church. Of all the ideas that I have heard put forward as to the alleged heresy of Dante the strangest is that of his having been directly influenced by the Albigensian doctrines in such a degree that his poems, especially in the last two parts, the *Purgatory* and the *Inferno*, are continually impregnated with them. I have heard this thesis sustained by very well known occultists, deeply versed in the so-called hermetic sciences, who have specialised in the various heresies of the Middle Ages and especially the Albigensian heresy, the most formidable perhaps in the history of the Church. Without wishing to enter here into an historical and theological discussion which would lead us away from the subject of this book, it appears to me that the doctors of hermetic lore exaggerate when they try to make Dante a direct follower of the Albigenses. It so happens that I have to some extent examined the history of the Albigenses, for, as I was born in the heart of Aquitania, the stormy annals of my ancestors drew my curiosity to this point. Now if Dante were an Albigensian he would not be a Catholic, nor even a Christian.

Albigensianism, or more precisely Catharism, was not a simple heresy like that of Arius and, later, those of John Huss and Calvin. The Arians of old, like the Protestants later, were simple heretics in the sense that they departed from the catholic orthodoxy perpetuated by the teaching

of the Roman Church. But they remained fundamentally Christians, not disputing the divinity of Christ and the foundation of the Gospel. Albigensianism or Catharism, on the other hand, was quite distinctly another religion than Christianity and brought to the west a complete subversion of the traditional faith. This religion was the direct descendant of Manicheism, which contained nothing of Christianity beyond some vague allusions to the saintship of Jesus. The Albigenses believed in the existence of two opposing deities: a God of good and a God of evil, each independent of the other and fighting with equal weapons. Some, it is true, about the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mitigated slightly the difficulties of this dualism by allowing the God of good a certain superiority and final triumph over the God of evil. But this simple exposition will serve to show how fundamentally Albigensianism differed from Christianity.

Let us emphasise also the fact that for the purest Albigenses Jesus Christ was not God, the incarnate Son of God, but a divine spirit on an equal plane with the various Manous, Brahmas, Zoroasters, and others, emanating from the divine substance and sent on a mission into the world by the good God to fight the evil God. It was something analogous to the aesthetic and nebulous conceptions of the good M. Schuré in *Les Grands Initiés*, or those more brilliant, but equally vague, of Renan in *La Vie de Jésus*. With this difference however, that the ideas of Renan and M. Schuré about Christ only interest passive, more or less cultured readers and do not touch the people, whereas

the Catharistic and Albigensian doctrines constituted an organic religion, preached by ardent propagandists. And these doctrines from the east had been spreading in the west since the tenth century, first in Bulgaria and the Balkans; then in the eleventh century in Italy, notably in Milan; then in Germany; and most of all, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in the south of France.

The basis of the illusion that Catharism was merely a Christian heresy is the fact that this Christian doctrine, becoming transformed in the course of its passage into Europe, had to some extent coalesced with the heresies already existing in the west, especially with that of the Vaudois who, having remained Christians at heart, claimed to go back to the primitive Gospel and follow religiously the ruling of the apostles. Now since the Manichean Catharides admitted Christ as the last envoy of God, and consequently the Gospel as the teaching of this Missionary of the Invisible, they also adopted, like the Vaudois, the more rigorous moral ruling of the earliest Christians, and hence confusion arose in the east between this religion, entirely distinct from that of Jesus, and the existence of a new heresy.

To return to Dante. There was nothing Albigensian or Catharistic in the actual essence of his religion, for if there had been he would not have made the clear profession of Catholic faith that occurs several times in his *Divina Commedia*. It is sufficient to quote these two fragments of verses known to all:

Credo in un Dio
Solo ed eterno

This is the radical negation of Manicheistic Albigensianism. Then let us remember this no less popular line:

E credo in tre persone eterne. . . .

This is the essence of Christianity and the absolute negation of Catharism. It would be necessary to admit that Dante, from prudence, was dissimulating his true beliefs and flaunting one which at heart he did not profess. This would be an intellectual infamy which it could occur to no one to suppose with regard to so lofty and righteous a soul as that of this great poet. So, then, there can be no Albigensian infiltration in Dante's doctrine. But if his doctrine remained purely Christian it is possible that, in his actual practice and his manner of regarding the manners of his time, the author of the *Inferno* had been influenced by the rigid and haughty fanaticism of those reformers of the western world who had succeeded in arousing the wonder of even good Catholics by their austerity and the rigour of their public and private conduct. It was by means of this rigour and this austerity, moreover, that the Catharides had conquered, and dragged in their train the rude mountaineers of the Cevennes and higher Languedoc, the ancestors of those same mystical and instinctively rebellious peasants who were later to keep alive in the south of France, between Montauban and Nîmes, one of the most ardent flames of militant Protestantism.

Now let us not forget that, when Dante was adolescent, his precocious young soul awakening to all the breaths of life and filling itself with the grandiose visions

furnished by his study of history and contemporary agitations, it was scarcely half a century since the Albigensian religion had been crushed by the efforts of a terrible crusade. All the Latin west was still filled with the bloody memories evoked by the mere names of Béziers, Toulouse, and Muret. The tragic and dizzy disappearance of an entire civilisation such as was being developed by this prosperous federation of the Occitanian south, where the sonorous *langue d'oc* was spoken; this great ethnical drama, to-day almost completely forgotten, and to which, in all countries of the world, official history hardly devotes as much attention as to submerged Atlantis; all this, in the time of Dante, lived and burned with fiery actuality and Italy especially still vibrated with it. There were between the *terre d'oc* and the land of Italy innumerable and imponderable affinities due to racial relationship; commercial and intellectual intercourse; their similar origin as Latin provinces, fanned by the same Mediterranean breezes; and, further, the striking resemblance between the two tongues spoken on the two sides of the Alps and on the same banks of the same sea. All Italy was deeply moved and prolonged the melancholy echo of dying Occitania.

The illustrious troubadours, driven from the provinces, trampled upon and ravaged by the soldiers of Simon de Montfort, found throughout the peninsula, and down to the court of Sicily, a refuge in some degree fraternal, and they were the first masters of Italian poetry, which still stammered until the coming of the great Alighieri. All the

lettered inhabitants of the Italian cities spoke Provençal as well as Italian. A legend, erroneous by the way, has it that Dante hesitated between Occitanian and Italian to write his immortal poem. This legend is indeed inadmissible, for writing his work in the vulgar tongue of his country was an integral part of the poet's genius. But that this legend should have been able to exist is proof that Dante was very advanced in the knowledge of Provençal letters. Certain tercets of the *Divina Commedia* bear testimony to this. Dante certainly knew some of the troubadours and disciples of the troubadours, as well as disciples of the scattered Albigenses. Did he not even go to the south of France in the course of the mysterious journeys he made during those few years of his life that still remain somewhat obscure? It has been denied. It has also been confirmed. I believe in the probability of these journeys in Occitania. I can only give poetic proof of them, but it seems to me no less sound and concrete than all the abstract reasonings put forward by those who deny his journey to France and particularly the south.

In Canto IX of the *Inferno*, he writes these four lines which serve as a simile in his account of his infernal vision :

> " Si come ad Arli, ove Rodano stagna,
> Si com'a Pola, presso del Carnaro,
> Ch' Italia chiude e suoi termini bagna,
> Fanno i sepulcri tutt' il loco varo. . . ."[1]

[1] " As at Arles, where the Rhone stagnates, as at Pola near the Quarnaro gulf, which shuts up Italy and bathes its confines, the sepulchres make all the place uneven. . . ."

Now there is with poets, and especially such visual poets as Dante, an instinctive rule, imposed by the very nature of poetry, never to evoke a real image as accurately as it exists in the author's brain. If, then, Dante compares the vision of the tortured heretics in hell with certain peculiarities of the cemetery of Alyscamps, at the foot of the walls of Arles on the banks of the Rhone, and those of Pola near the Quarnaro gulf, it is because the vision of Arles and the Rhone is within him, because he has seen Arles and the Rhone just as he has seen Pola and Quarnaro, which seems admitted; if not there would have been no reason why the image of Arles should enter his brain and that of Pola would have sufficed. A purely literary simile would have been in contradiction to the concrete and living genius of this supreme poet. I do not offer this explanation as infallible, for a lapse of logic may sometimes occur even with the greatest geniuses. Meanwhile, until the contrary is irrefutably proved, I remain convinced, for my part, that Dante went in the course of his travels, if not to Paris, at least to Provence, Arles and the Occitanian south of France.

But even admitting that I am wrong, and I readily grant it in order to pass on, it is incontestable that the influence of the troubadours upon him was considerable, as it was upon all his forerunners and masters. The great critic, Francesco de Sanctis, does not hesitate to agree with this in his *History of Italian Literature.*

As Fauriel clearly says in his *Introduction à l'histoire de la Croisade contre les Albigeois,* "The troubadours dealt

frankly and courageously with the Crusade (against the Albigenses), and the latter took its revenge." All the *sirventes* of indignation penned by the writers of the *langue d'oc*, who had been exiled from their beautiful country by Simon de Montfort's barbarians, still rang freshly in the memory of Dante's contemporaries, and particularly in his own sensitive mind. Besides, would not the whole of that literature, all quivering with the people's pain, which nourished Dante's youth, still have remained. The facts themselves were too vividly present in all memories for an imagination like that of the great poet not to be moved by them. Without wishing to revive century-old rancours which should be dead to-day, it is necessary to state, in order that Dante and his intellectual vibrations may be fully understood, that the war against the Albigenses, or rather against the country in which a few Albigenses lived, was one of the most terrible and most sensational events in all history. Our pitiless French education has to such an extent succeeded in effacing, almost completely, the memory of this tremendous catastrophe in the brains of successive generations, that to-day this great historical drama appears as vague and distant as the fall of Babylon or the disappearance of the kingdom of Sheba; but it was not so in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Remember that an entire civilisation, with its language, literature, customs, laws, and all its dreams of the future, was in a few years completely crushed and driven out of history. Suppose that in 1870–1871 Germany had been able to pursue her victorious march through the whole of France

and impose upon our country her barracks, customs, laws, and even her language, and you will have an idea of the conduct of the kings of *l'Ile de France* towards the free cities of Occitania at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Certainly if such a misfortune had happened to us it is probable that it would still be spoken of in the neighbouring countries, and that the souls of great poets would be profoundly moved by it.

Such was the position of Dante in adolescence, and as a young man, with regard to that land of Oc which he admired, loved and wept, and whose genius he had absorbed through the study of her poets. He still preserved an ineffable horror and hatred of this glaring historical calamity and of his own partly Occitanian education, which can be found in all his work mingling inextricably with his own horror of the wrongs to which his country had been subjected and his private hatred for the persecutors of his ideas and person.

And this, it must be said, is what explains and excuses the Ghibeline sectarianism of Dante, his fierce imperialism, his ardent appeal to the horse of the German Caesar and his fury against the temporal claims of the Holy See.

To understand a man of this breadth of reach, even in his mistakes, it is necessary to place ourselves in the atmosphere in which he lived. This gives the clue to the two great objects of his hatred: the kings of France and the temporal popes. The Holy See, indeed, and the French monarchy, especially for an Italian mind contemporary with Brunetto Latini, Guido Cavalcante and Dante, emerged from

this Albigensian tragedy with a terrible and bloody reputation. Whatever may be said to-day to justify this adventure they certainly had gone rather far. In my opinion the Holy See bears much less responsibility than the Frankish monarchy for this savage destruction, and it was, and is still, a mistake to place them on the same plane. The Papacy, which had just instigated the great Crusade to the east to stop the progress of the Mussulman religion, could not avoid combating this other religion from the east, which had insinuated itself into the heart of Christianity, and which, from the Catholic point of view, was more dangerous to Christian imaginations than Mahomedanism itself. The Pope then launched a crusade against the Albigenses, as his predecessors had launched others against the votaries of Mahomet. Given the period, it was quite natural, and we must either deny the spirit which animated the crusades, or understand that against Occitania as we understand those against Jerusalem. Innocent III, then, summoned to his aid the crusaders of the northern countries who had remained faithfully Catholic, and charged them to repress the onslaughts of the enemy religion. It was the Crusaders themselves who overshot the mark, and transformed into a political expedition and racial war what should have been in principle a religious repression. Simon de Montfort and his knights and soldiers fighting in the name of the King of France, conducted themselves in Occitania as the knights of Godefroy de Bouillon had never conducted themselves on infidel soil. The kings of France seized this opportunity to crush a superior and rival civilisation and to seize for their sole

profit—and not that of the Church—a country which did not belong to them but which they had long coveted.

It must not be believed that all the inhabitants of Occitania were Albigenses; the votaries of this new religion were even in a minority, only forming small groups scattered among certain towns, and especially in the country districts. But from the outset the Crusaders of the King of France let it be seen, as Mistral puts it, that "under the religious pretext was hidden racial antagonism." "And that is why," adds the great poet of *Calendal*, "the free towns of Provence, although strongly Catholic, sided boldly against the Crusaders."

After this one can understand the stifled indignation of Dante and his contemporaries against the "*Fleurdelisés*," and realise how, for a man of lofty mind like the author of the *Convito*, the ferocious gesture of the Frankish kings was still near and living, whereas the incursions of Otho, Henry III, Henry IV, and Barbarossa already belonged to the history of the distant past.

We must add, alas, that the descendants of Louis VIII, the vanquisher of the Counts of Toulouse, were not slow to show towards Rome and the Holy See itself that spirit of prepotence from which the land of Oc had suffered so much, and the reign of Philippe-le-Bel, the contemporary of Dante, was not of a nature to obliterate in the mind of the great Florentine poet the memory of Occitania ravaged by his great-grandfather.

In the long struggle between Caesar and Peter, through all the multiform transformations adopted by tenacious Caesar, one of the most savage and also the most subtle

was that which manifested itself in this rude and cunning king of France, grandson of St. Louis. Caesar indeed is not necessarily an emperor or necessarily Germanic. He is there wherever force tries to subjugate the spirit and dominate the world, be it east or west of the Rhine, north or south of the Alps. Peter had conquered the Caesar of Germany ; now he was to find himself face to face with the Caesar of France, worse than the other. No patriotic consideration shall prevent me from telling the truth on this subject, namely, that the severest and most perfidious violation to which the Papacy has had to submit, prior to Charles V, was perpetrated by the monarchy of the Capets. Strange mysteries of history ! A poet had appealed to the king of France to overthrow the Albigensian heresy, and the king of France took advantage of this to suppress an entire civilisation. A few years, less than a century, later the great grandson of this same king of France, whose power had been so greatly increased by the help of the Pope, assumes in his turn the rôle of Caesar and condemns Peter to suffer the direst humiliation he has ever known. And, a really striking detail, the counsellor of this new Caesar, his instrument in these base works, the man who was to appear at the gates of Rome to spit at Peter, smite him, and threaten him with death, in the name of his master, was a descendant of the conquered Albigenses, the lawyer Guillaume de Nogaret, born in that same Toulouse which was stormed by the great grandfather of Philippe-le-Bel, with the support of a predecessor of Boniface VIII ! How mysterious and moving are the secrets of history for those who cannot see the hidden currents !

Let us recall briefly how the Papacy had to suffer at Anagni, in the heart of a Roman province, a defeat the humiliation of which was almost as deep as the victory of Canossa was glorious. And it was a king of France who thus succeeded in avenging the check suffered by a German emperor!

That Boniface VIII was not so noble a pope or so fine a figure as Gregory VII, Alexander III, and Innocent IV is possible. His reign may have been troubled and stained with blood. Perhaps he deserved some of Dante's invective. But the French King's treatment of him is none the less unpardonable.

Philippe-le-Bel and Boniface VIII quarrelled over questions of predominance which it would take too long to enumerate here. But the quarrel matters little; it is the climax that is striking. The King knew that on the eve of Christmas in the year 1303 the Pope was about to pronounce the major excommunication against him, for Philippe, King of France, had summoned to Paris an assembly of notables, at which the Pope had been accused of heresy, blasphemy and dealings with demons. These rude men of the Middle Ages did not mince their words. But Philippe-le-Bel was not content with insult; he despatched to Italy, a few weeks before Christmas, his lawyer who was always ready for everything, the Toulousian Guillaume de Nogaret—a renegade from his recently conquered native country of Occitania—giving him as a companion Sciarra-Colonna, one of the most vindictive members of the Colonna family who were the enemies of

Boniface VIII. Nogaret and Sciarra, furnished with considerable sums of money, collected on their way adventurers ready for any enterprise, and on the very eve of Christmas, before the publication of the Bull of excommunication, they arrived unexpectedly in the little town of Anagni, situated on a picturesque hill to the south of Rome, and there found Pope Boniface VIII. The Pontiff, seeing all resistance vain, donned his pontifical robes, placed upon his head his tiara, mounted his throne and awaited his tormentors. Nogaret and Sciarra, followed by their band, insulted him and hurled in his face the most infamous accusations, while Colonna struck the Pope, a son of the Caetani family, with his iron glove. Meanwhile the neighbouring cities and countryside rose against the assassins and their hired soldiers and came to the rescue of the old man, who returned in triumph to Rome ; a few days later the pain and humiliation killed him.

This outrage at Anagni is without excuse because it is beyond all reason and devoid of any dignity. Otho, Henry III, Henry IV, Barbarossa, Frederick II treated the Pope as enemies, but at least as kings. Philippe-le-Bel, who may be said to be the first in date of the *rois muflés*, behaved, not as one of the powerful of the earth at war with another power, but like a vindictive boor preparing an ambush and hiring with gold the cut-throats charged to carry out his vengeance. To send to Italy, with large sums of money in their pockets, a crafty lawyer from Toulouse and a Colonna who was a personal enemy of the Pope, with orders to collect on their way all the hired

assassins who would follow them, and then make a surprise attack on an old man surrounded by priests in a castle on the outskirts of Rome, was surely a glorious enterprise for the grandson of St. Louis! It was carried out in odious manner. Sciarra-Colonna and Nogaret, followed by their bandits, entered Anagni at night, after bribing those who treacherously opened the gates to them. An octogenarian pope, wearing his pontifical ornaments and crowned with the tiara, was insulted, smitten in the face, threatened with the sword, dragged by the hair, and exposed to the jeers of a populace excited by hired agitators. After that who can fail to understand the anger of Dante himself, even though he was the enemy of Boniface VIII; Dante, who was 38 when this royal sacrilege was committed and who heard it described by eye-witnesses!

Whatever may have been the errors of this pope, he was, none the less, the Vicar of Christ, recognised by all Christianity; he bore upon his forehead and upon his shoulders the insignia of his office, and he was 86 years old.

" Perché men paia il mal futuro e il fatto
Veggio in Alagna intrar lo fiordaliso,
E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto
Veggiolo un'altra volta esser deriso;
Veggio rinnovellar l'aceto e'l fele,
E tra vivi ladroui esser anciso."

(*Purg.*, canto xx.)

" In order that the ill to come and past, may seem less, I see the *fleur-de-lys* enter Alagna, and in his vicar Christ made captive.

" A second time I see him mocked; I see the vinegar and gall renewed, and him slain between living thieves."

A few somewhat extreme French Chauvins, and notably the great Veuillot, have censured Dante for his invective against the dynasty of France. The truth, however, is that the sight of the cynical muzzle of this Philippe-le-Bel obtruding itself upon history inclines one to think that this time Dante showed exemplary moderation.

Well, the ignoble gesture of Anagni is as nothing in the annals of this French king who was to become in the evolution of history the new Caesar, the persecutor of Peter. He was to accomplish something more Caesarian and antichristian yet, something that might have killed the Church did not everything prove her immortality. What neither the Roman bullies nor the Gothic and Vandal Barbarians nor the German persecutors had accomplished, he was to carry through in cold blood and treachery, through intrigue and deceit. He was to drive Peter from Rome. He was to drag the Pope from the town that his predecessors had saved, restored, and refounded. He was to transform the Vicar of Christ into his own vicar, and abase him to the rank of his servant. In truth it was scarcely worth while to have struggled for three hundred years and more against the German Emperor, and to have forced him to kneel in the snow, only to become later the chaplain of a sacrilegious king, and leave for him the tomb of the apostles.

This captivity in Avignon was the most painful defeat that Peter has ever suffered at the hands of Caesar in all his long trial. Painful in itself, because of its shame ; terrible in its consequences, because of the century of schism which followed it. We know to-day that the Church has shaken

it off, as she has emerged triumphant from all her other trials, and we consider her all the more powerful for having passed through it. But let us put ourselves in the place of the distinguished minds which at the beginning of the fourth century witnessed this calamity without knowing how it was to end. This will explain Dante's or Petrach's most bitter imprecations, and we shall understand even how, forgetting the battles of Parma and Legnano, the descents of the Barbarians upon the peninsula, the heroic reigns of Innocent IV, Alexander II, and Gregory VII, and even the glories of Canossa, they should have turned their eyes anxiously towards the German Caesar, then the only possible deliverer, and should have cried to him to come to the aid of unhappy Rome :

" Viene a vedver la tua Roma che piagne,
Vedova e sola, e di e notte chiama :
Cesare mio, perchè non m' accompagne ? "

We see, then, that, in the light of the history of his time and all he saw before him and around him of the stormy history of the Church, the attitude, and even the excesses, of the great poet of the *Inferno* are fully justified. Without having being affected by the doctrines of the Albigenses, and with his essential Christianity still unshaken, he was, nevertheless, strongly impressed by the martyrdom of a civilisation that he loved, and in his attitude towards the Holy See there remained something of the austerity, and even of the spirit of rebellion, that the Albigensian devotees had spread through the south of France, and which the troubadours in their turn had propagated in Italy. He had known mortifications of his own,

those of his native town, those of Italy, and those of the Holy See, and the unrolling of contemporary events, far from attenuating his first feelings against the ambition of the kings of France and the temporal weaknesses of the Church, only served to excite and irritate further his censorious, violent, and idealistic mind. The *Divina Commedia* throbs, from beginning to end, with the vibrations provoked, to some extent, by the shock of a strong and ardent soul against the terrible realities of his time.

But, granted that this work be rendered clearly and perfectly comprehensible by those contingencies of his time that are relevant to it, does it follow that we should regard his ideas with the respect due to absolute and eternal truths? And, however great the prestige of his poetic genius, are we to allow it to impose upon our minds to-day the political, and even the religious errors of a man passionate, and often prejudiced, who lived six hundred years ago in one of the most troubled periods of history? Certainly not. However great the poet, however sincere and disinterested the man, we must state without hesitation how false, and even sacrilegious, was the fundamental conception of his policy, which implied giving equal historical rank to the Pope and the Emperor, one the master by the sword, the other by the spirit. Whatever may have been the immediate reasons for the mistake, it was a mistake; if not from the point of view of purely material politics, which are essentially mobile, unstable, and ephemeral, at least and most emphatically from the point of view of Christian policy, the instinct and the vision of which,

through all the storms she has weathered, the Church has preserved in spite of everything. To make Peter the equal of Caesar and his associate in the government of the nations was to misunderstand them both. It showed more clearly than anything else complete failure to understand the words of the Master. There is even a point at which this great Catholic poet almost touches heresy, and actually indulges in blasphemy. It is when, in the last canto of the *Inferno*, he places together, as condemned to the same torture, Judas who betrayed Christ and Brutus and Cassius who betrayed Caesar.

" 'Quell' anima là su c'ha maggior pena,'
Disse'l maestro, 'è Giuda Scariotto,
Che'l' capo ha dentro e fuor le gambe mena.
De li attri due c'harmo il capo di sotto,
Quel che pende dal nero ceffo è Bruto;
Vedi come si storce e non fa motto;
E l'altro è Cassio che par sè membruto. . . .' "[1]

(*Inferno*, canto xxxiv.)

For this implacable imperialist, the two passionate but disinterested citizens, violent but heroic, who risked their lives to deliver the Roman Republic from the menace of a tyrant, are placed almost in the same rank as the odious, grasping, lying disciple who, after kissing his Master—and what a master!—goes away to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver! Strange, very strange! But there is stranger to follow. To place the criminals on an

[1] "'That soul up there, which suffers greatest punishment,' said the Master, 'is Judas Iscariot, he who has his head within, and outside plies his legs. Of the other two, who have their heads beneath, that one, who hangs from the black visage, is Brutus: see how he writhes himself and utters not a word; and the other is Cassius, who seems so stark of limb. . . .'"

equal plane in punishment is obviously to do the same with the victims, for it is the greatness of the victims alone that has prompted the punishment of the criminals. Thus we reach the conclusion that in Dante's mind there is parity between Caesar, the homicide who ground nations beneath his heel, and Jesus, who died on the cross to save them. . . .

Let us stop there. I have all my life been too ardent an admirer of the *Divina Commedia's* inspiring magic to dare conclude to-day that this great Catholic poet has, on occasion, confused Christ and Antichrist. . . .

### 4.—*Charles V*

Dante's exasperated appeal to Caesar's steed was not to be answered until two hundred years after his death. During these two centuries the Church experienced the most tragic, and perhaps, from the terrestrial point of view, most glorious experiences. First she suffered the great schism of the west, the inevitable consequence of her long exile ; then, suddenly, after a storm that died down in a blaze of sunlight on the waters, she found herself together with the whole of Europe, immersed in the dazzling radiance of the Renaissance.

There is no need for us to pause here to consider this great revival of western history, whose immediate and indirect causes were so multiple and so deep that even a cursory study of them would extend to a whole book. Let us confine ourselves to recalling that the origin of this

outburst of joy and exuberant creation which stirred the civilisation of Europe did not lie in the discovery of a few Greek or Latin masterpieces, but in a whole combination of historical facts, the coincidence of which is, in truth, a cause of wonder : the end of the Hundred Years' War in France and the outwitting of the great feudal nobles by Louis XI ; in Spain the liberation of the country from Arab domination, and, to crown this achievement, the discovery of America ; in England the accession to the throne of the sumptuous Tudors ; in Venice the victory of Peter Loredan over the Turks, whilst on land the Republic brought under its sway Padua, Verona, Udina, Brescia, Bergama and Rovigo, and seemed to have consolidated for ever its threatened power ; in Naples the instauration of the dynasty of Aragon and the reign of Ferdinand the Magnificent ; in Rome, finally, the scattering for ever of the persistent nightmare of schism with the happy reign of Pope Colonna who, under the name of Martin V, inaugurated the rule of the popes of great family. . . .

Indeed some of them were perhaps to push too far this taste for grandeur and material splendour.

But who, at this period of fabulous revival, when artists, poets, and orators seemed to pour from the most insignificant cities, could resist this universal thrust of youth renewed ? The popes themselves, leaders of men as well as shepherds of souls, were in their turn intoxicated by the beauty of this apparently new world. Convinced that Caesar had now been driven from Rome for ever, they yielded into the hands of the greatest artists Italy has ever

produced the great city, rescued at last from the troubles of history, and apparently free henceforward from the eternal menace of Peter's enemy. . . .

The truth is that during this vivid period no true Caesar arose in Europe. The Valois, successors of Philippe-le-Bel, had fought in the Hundred Years' War and the imperial orb was sometimes struggled for by the rival families, sometimes confided to mediocre sovereigns. The only great monarch who appeared in this tumultuous fifteenth century was Louis XI of France ; but he, too wise or too modern to amuse himself by playing at being master of the world, was content to consolidate his own house. His son, the crack-brained Charles VIII, had nothing of Caesar beyond a taste for parade and battle, and he passed like a meteor through a cloud of smoke. But once a true Caesar appears we shall see that Dante's appeal to the imperial horse will not have been made in vain.

Two hundred years after the death of Dante the German and Flemish horsemen of Charles V, led by that renegade Frenchman, Charles de Bourbon, advanced to the siege of Rome. . . .

Charles V, indeed, was to realise completely the dream of the great patriot ; Rome was to be thrust without a murmur under the feet of Caesar, the Pope reduced to the rôle of Vicar of the Emperor, and Italy at last to become a well tended garden of the Empire.

An inevitable destiny. It was written that upon his elevation to the throne every true Caesar—except Charlemagne—whoever he might be and wherever he might

come from; Spain or Italy, France, Flanders, or Germany, should raise the sword against Peter; and the greater he was the more cruel he would be, as if his imperial intuition taught him that the Word transmitted by Peter would sooner or later sound his doom. Charles V was perhaps not the greatest, but he was the fiercest incarnation of Caesar in the whole of history. Was this successor and avenger of Henry IV, Barbarossa and Frederick II, rising suddenly and unforseen amid the full splendour of the Renaissance and several centuries after the famous struggles between the Church and the Empire, the genius some of his historians would have us believe? Was he as fortunate as certain others make out? The cause of his power matters little, nor whether it came from him or from his ancestors. What is certain is that he exercised an irresistible influence over the events of his time, and had the good fortune not to find himself faced, either as nations or as individuals, by the obstacles against which the Caesars of the Hohenstauffen family dashed themselves. Apart from the volatile and vacillating Francis I of France, who alone could have stood against his rival's ambition but had neither sufficient constancy in his plans nor energy in his actions, Charles of Habsbourg did not encounter any adversary of real strength among the political powers of his century.

Through his father, Philippe-le-Bel, sovereign of Flanders, Artois and the Franche-Comte; through his mother, Jeanne la Folle, king of all Spain, Naples, Sardinia and Sicily, his domains were so situated that his elevation to the Empire found him pressing on Northern Italy from all sides. Venice was, at that time, with France, the only political power that

could attempt seriously to resist him, and the Papacy, the ancient and traditional protectress of Italian liberty, was equally to be feared by him. But, alas, defence of these same liberties required that they should be living, while in fact they were now nothing but a memory. The time of the communal claims was past; the municipalities had gradually been transformed into dependencies of the nobility; and the heroes of Legnano and Parma who had driven back Barbarossa and Frederick II had lapsed, in their descendants, into faithful subjects of luxury-loving princes. The ancient Florence of Savonarola and Gino Capponi alone showed some inclination to revolt; but, already subdued to obedience by several generations of Medicis, she too was soon ready to resign herself to the hereditary rule of her Grand Dukes.

Charles V, a silent, meditative, dissembling young prince, then hardly 20 years of age, found the possibility of world empire within reach of his hand, for beyond the oceans, he was master of the recently discovered new world. He would indeed have had to be devoid of all ambition not to dream of being the master of the world. In his case opportunity took the place of genius.

The greatest obstacle in the way of such an ambition was neither Venice, nor even France, but Rome, who could oppose to Caesar a power equal in prestige, strength, and universality; Rome, who had already triumphed over so many other Caesars, and whose power was all the stronger for being incommensurable and almost impalpable. To be master of the world, then, it was necessary first to

be master of Italy and Rome. In the case of Italy this was relatively easy, since Charles V already possessed nearly the half, together with Naples, Sicily and Sardinia. It was sufficient, then, to drive France out of Milan and to reduce Venice also to impotence. But Rome was another affair. The Pope could not be driven out, since he was the Vicar of God, and Charles a good Catholic. But he might be subdued and reduced to servitude.

His subjugation was all the more easy since it was necessary for the Church herself. And herein appeared the fanatical, narrow, even barbarous and frankly anti-Roman character of the Emperor Charles V. It is well to insist on this particular point in order to understand and explain fully the outrageous treatment of Rome herself by this new Caesar. One of the most widely current errors cherished by the public mind, and even some superficial professors of history, is to imagine Charles V as a Latin prince, belonging to the Renaissance. Because he was King of Spain and descended through his mother from Ferdinand and Isabella, one is tempted to regard him as an emperor of Mediterranean nationality, as opposed to the emperors of Germanic origin like his turbulent predecessors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Moreover, because he affected some pomp and ceremony in his triumphs and imperial manifestations and condescended to protect a few sycophantic artists like Titian, some regard him as the successor of the magnificent sovereigns and popes who encouraged the artistic blossoming of Italy. This is inexact. In spite of his maternal ancestry there was nothing Latin

in Charles of Habsbourg, who was purely northern through his paternal ancestry, especially his grandfather Maximilian, the prototype of the worthy German prince. But more still than by racial descent, Charles V was anti-Latin by education and upbringing. His life had been passed in the atmosphere of the Court of Brussels and Anvers which at that time was inimical to Italy. And he himself, from his tenderest years, assumed that grave, composed, and, even melancholy manner so entirely in contrast with the usual affability of the princes of that time; especially of his great rival Francis I, who indeed was still impregnated with the Renaissance and drawn to admiration of Rome and Italy. Finally, and this is of importance, Charles of Habsbourg, when Prince of Burgundy, had as tutor of his mind and soul that virtuous and severe, but madly fanatical and narrow-minded old monk who was one day to be Pope Adrian VI. Adrian of Utrecht was indeed the only powerful influence that ruled, and continued to rule, the next Caesar, whom he deservedly crushed. All the leanings towards Spanish bigotry which the young Prince of Burgundy inherited from his maternal ancestors were to act as a leaven to the anti-Latin, anti-Italian, and almost anti-papal hatred that the old Netherland professor was to ferment in the soul of his royal pupil.

Rome indeed has always had, and always will have, two kinds of enemies, equally formidable: the fanatics who cut adrift from her and become rebels or heretics, and the fanatics who remain and pose as carping censors or predestined reformers. The former attack the Church

from without, the latter from within. The former are called Lutherans, the latter Jansenists. The former realise that they are enemies ; the latter do not, but they are the most relentless.

Now Adrian of Utrecht, a compatriot of the later Jansenius, hated the Roman Church unconsciously and unwillingly but from instinct, while believing that he belonged to her more than anyone else, and even that he was saving her. He detested Rome as much as did his contemporary Luther, although in a different way. For him, as for Luther, and as the result of similar fanaticism and identical lack of understanding, the luxurious Rome of the sixteenth century was the sewer of the world, the sink of Satan, the Babylon of all the vices, the great prostitute of the Apocalypse that the fire of heaven alone could purify. But, having less pride and personal ambition than Luther, being by nature very upright, very honest, and as virtuous as a saint, he had no thought of rebelling, and certainly none of posing as the apostle of a new religion, but contented himself with praying heaven to save the threatened Church. And when it became his duty to mould the soul of a future king of this world, perhaps even a future emperor, he inculcated in his powerful disciple, to the best of his power, his apocalyptic and vituperative fanaticism, and his seed fell on good soil.

This had been the preparation, these were the tendencies of Charles V when he became Emperor at the age of 15. It was certain that Italy would be the goal of his inevitable designs. As fanatical as his old master, but without the

virtues, patience, and humility of the pious Archbishop of Utrecht, the young Emperor, intoxicated by the incommensurable power placed in his hands when he was hardly more than adolescent, believed himself summoned by the divine will, not only to rule the world but to direct and restore the Church. It was he who was to deliver Rome from her popes and cardinals, whom he condemned as pagans and whose Latin taste for the material beauty of their religion he detested. He it also was who should deliver Christianity from the rebellious German monks and the princes who protected them. It was not equality between Caesar and Peter of which this new monarch dreamed, as did the illusioned soul of the great Dante; it was of the absolute supremacy of Caesar over Peter. It was of Caesar appointing and dominating Peter, and that for the greater well-being of the Church. When a man has such ideas when he is twenty and an emperor, what can be the result? This time the logical result was the sack of Rome, the most bloody and abominable profanation that Peter was ever to suffer at the hands of Caesar.

But before resorting to this horrible act, Charles V tried to become the master of the Church without resorting to violence. He wanted to protect her as she had already been protected by Philippe-le-Bel and as Barbarossa had desired to protect her, but with a stronger arm than that of these two medieval sovereigns and, let us admit, with greater sincerity, for he himself firmly believed in his providential mission.

He detested Leo X as his master Adrian detested him. This magnificent and feeble Pontiff who was to give his name to one of the greatest centuries of history was, in reality, of mediocre capacity and very uncertain character. He has been so riddled with abuse by the Lutheran pamphleteers, as also by the Emperor's friends, that he still excites some sympathy, for not all of this passionate invective was deserved. But this lordly Pope who wept beside the deathbed of Raphael and did more than any other to dower Rome with artistic masterpieces, was far from bringing to political affairs the ardour and far-sightedness he displayed in his protection of the arts. It was very evident that he understood nothing of the movement instigated by Luther. This elegant and lettered prince, the friend of Michael Angelo and Bembo, despised these quarrels of the German monks, the only one who interested him in this business being Luther, for John of Medici had too much literary taste not to be struck by the eloquence and genius of the reformer. Now this blindness, together with so many other causes, was well calculated to stretch to the breaking point the exasperation of the Emperor Charles V, who, brought up in the north, moulded by the Archbishop of Utrecht and more instructed in German questions, at once grasped the dangers of Luther's revolt both for the Church and for the Empire. Scarcely two years after the accession of Charles to the Empire, Leo X died suddenly, hardly 46 years of age and when his splendid health seemed to destine him to a long reign.

Had Charles V and his friends any hand in this sudden death? It was thought so for a moment, and the German historians themselves have so insinuated. But it seems to be proved to-day that the luxurious and still young Pope of the Renaissance died of malarial fever contracted in the neighbourhood of Rome. Meanwhile Charles V, in no way disconcerted by this event, seemed to have foreseen everything; and Manuel, his agent in Rome, was not inactive. Immediately after the death of Leo X the Conclave assembled and, without delay, elected Caesar's tutor, the Archbishop of Utrecht, who was absolutely unknown in Rome, and who took the name of Adrian VI.

Certainly in the old monk of the Netherlands, the former librarian of Louvain who had lived as an ascetic and whose whole life had been passed in study, there was nothing to render him unworthy of such an elevation to the throne of Peter; and if, possibly, there had been some intrigue connected with the death of Leo X and the election of his successor, the saint of Utrecht had no hand in it, and remained ignorant of it. With his high sense of uprightness and independence, he even tried to resist the ambitions of his former pupil and received the imperial representative, Manuel, coldly, when, after the Conclave in January, 1522, the latter presumed to tell him in haughty tones that the new Pontiff ought to be grateful to God and the Emperor. The new Pope made every effort to govern according to his own conscience, not hesitating even, on occasion, to revolt against the imperial will.

It is none the less true that, directly or indirectly, in spite of the noble attitude of Pope Adrian, Caesar meddled more and more in the government of Peter, which was the easier since the unfortunate Netherland Pontiff, a complete stranger to the customs, and even to the language of the Romans, was struggling with material and political difficulties for which he was not prepared. In the majority of cases, the affairs of the Church were directed by the agents of Caesar—exactly what the young Emperor wanted. Unfortunately, or fortunately—especially for him—the poor Netherland monk who had become a pope against his will, died after a reign of a few months. His sojourn in Rome was the cruellest expiation of the hatred which he had formerly nourished against Rome and which he had inculcated in his haughty pupil. He died resigned, praying and forgiving like a martyr, amidst the imprecations and jubilation of a hostile people as incapable of understanding him as he was of understanding them. Once more the Conclave was handed over to the intrigues of omnipotent Caesar. Charles V believed that Jules of Medici, cousin of Leo X, was subject to his influence, and he tried to favour his election. Julius of Medici was elected under the name of Clement VII. But scarcely was he elected when Pope Clement VII, although of undecided, nerveless character, realised that the omnipotence of Caesar was a danger to Peter's Church, and we know from the reports of the Venetian ambassadors that Clement VII clearly showed his intention of being Pope in reality, not the slave of the Emperor. When, later, he decided to ally himself with France and Venice in order to raise a

barrier against the terrifying ambition of the new Caesar, the anger of Charles V burst out in insults and imprecations against the Pope who dared to resist him, and he announced that he would himself invade Italy to visit his vengeance on all who had dared to offend him, "especially on this poltroon of a Pope."

Actually he did not go himself, but he did worse. He sent a horde of Lutheran mercenaries to inflict an exemplary chastisement upon the Pope and Rome. Thus, by a chain of logical consequences, the most powerful of all the Caesars who have reigned over Italy became, as a matter of course, the most odious desecrator of the throne of Peter.

This time, alas, it must be admitted that the soul of Gregory VII, Alexander III, and Innocent IV was not to be found in the Apostle's throne, whereas the new Caesar, on the other hand, was, by force of circumstances, stronger than Henry IV, Barbarossa or Frederick II. But does the fact that the weak and vacillating Julius of Medici did not display all the virtues of a Hildebrand, or those shown later by a Chiaramonti, make the imperial crime any less atrocious?

From Genseric down to Frederick II, not to mention the pillage of Robert Guiscard, Rome had been many times besieged; but never had the Eternal City witnessed the onslaught of such savage assailants as those launched by the will of the Most Catholic Roman Emperor.

The soldiers of Guiscard, Barbarossa, or Otho were indeed terrible barbarians, but beneath their violent, uncontrolled

temperament breathed a Christian, Catholic soul, and, not only had they no personal hatred against the successor of Peter, but, further, in the arcana of their hardened hearts there trembled some echoes of pious prayers and legends likely to make them bow their heads before the Vicar of Christ. Even the hordes of the Huns, Visigoths, and Vandals were capable of obeisance before the mysterious majesty of that great white priest who performed the gesture of the benediction.

The soldiers chosen by Charles V to capture the Sacred City were, on the other hand, bitter enemies of that city, determined beforehand to inflict upon her the greatest possible injury, for what they hated above everything was the religion symbolised by the name of Rome, and the Pope himself, whom they had long since learned to curse and vilify. Caesar could not but know, as he did know, that he was hurling against the Church and Peter the most ferocious of armed heretics—and armed by him.

It made no difference that their nominal chief was that miserable Constable of Bourbon, traitor to king and country, with no authority over his troops: the real chief was George Frundsberg, the commander of the *lansquenets*, prototype of the spiteful, rapacious *Reiter* who marched to the assault of the Holy See chanting an heretical hymn, and displaying to his soldiers, Lutherans like himself, the rope with which the Pope was to be hanged.

The siege and sack strike horror in the heart. All the German soldiery, making up the greater part of the army, threw themselves in frenzy upon everything that recalled

the Catholic religion. Cardinals were ripped open in the streets. Churches were pillaged with fury, the Holy Images thrown into the dirt, and the Host to the beasts. The most precious relics became objects of derision to the Lutheran hordes. A *lansquenet* grabbed the Holy Lance, and bands of tipsy soldiers drank the wine on the altars from golden chalices, aping with grins the liturgy of the Mass. The Pope, crushed under so many blows and shut up in the castle of S. Angelo, from the windows of which he could see the people, prelates, and cardinals of Rome struck down by the Barbarians, finally yielded, vanquished and impotent, to the messengers of that pious Emperor whose mandatory, Hugo of Moncado, dared to say that "God himself could not resist his victorious armies."

If there still existed in Rome some Ghibeline disciple of Dante, he must have enjoyed a very melancholy victory, for this time Caesar had, to all appearances, triumphed indeed. Peter was vanquished and a prisoner. All the liberty of Italy was destroyed and the Garden of the Empire could now blossom in peace. It is probable however that, had Dante still lived, that great citizen and poet, disillusioned by the reality, would have consigned victorious, sacrilegious Caesar to Hell and mourned over vanquished Peter, as once he mourned over his enemy Boniface, struck by the grandson of St. Louis.

Yet this victory was only ephemeral; at least that of Caesar over Peter, for after all the only victim of Charles V and his brutal domination was poor Italy, who was to

suffer so many years of servitude and abasement. The splendid Guelph liberty, stormy no doubt but living and heroic, which had given to Italy the most glorious centuries of her past history and the greatest masterpieces of poetry and art, was to give way to three hundred years and more of academic sycophancy, during which the Leonardos and Michael Angelos were to be replaced by the Guercinos and Guido Renis; the Dantes and Petrarchs by the Marinis and Metastasios. Nothing proves more decisively how blind was the error—sincere and noble, but an error—of Dante, Petrarch and all the Ghibelines of the Middle Ages. The appeal to Caesar was not only a sin against the Gospel, it was also an involuntary and innocent treachery against the very spirit of the country. During all that dark and bloody period of the Middle Ages, in spite of mistakes, despite the cruelly expiated illusion of Charlemagne and the Holy Empire, it was the Papacy which saw clearly, or which at any rate realised in its own mission the spirit of true liberty.

This trial was doubtless necessary to Italy in order that she might later attain final unity. But how the Italian patriots who witnessed the Renaissance and died late enough to witness the beginning of the period of decadence must have suffered! The dreadful melancholy that shrouded the last days of Michael Angelo can be understood.

For, I repeat, it was Italy chiefly who was the victim of the Imperial and Lutheran victory gained over Rome by the *lansquenets* of old Frundsberg. The rival nations of

the Empire were soon to increase in strength and preponderance. France and England, as well as Holland, were to transfer the central flame of European history to the west, and from this the Church herself, as in all her other trials, drew new strength for an early recovery. She was now sheltered for ever against imperial threats. It is a strange thing that although she had two or three times, after the defeats of Henry IV, Barbarossa, and Frederick II, thought that she had crushed her eternal enemy Caesar, it was only after the drastic victory of Charles V that she was delivered from him. It seems as though, after this atrocious siege of Rome, the most impious gesture since Caesar first existed, he collapsed under his own weight. Charles V was the last. Those who were to follow were merely shadows who did no more than stir up memories. From the imperial point of view the partition of the Empire was for Caesar the irreparable mistake, or rather the final punishment, which leads us to believe that Charles V had more luck than genius.

By handing on the crown of the Holy Empire to his brother Ferdinand, and that of Spain to the Infanta Philip, Charles V struck down for ever the Holy Empire, and relegated it to the rank of a secondary power which was never again to play a leading part in the affairs of the world. Spain, thus faced with competition in the west, was to take a direct part in the great struggles in which, for more than a century, she, England, and France were to be the principal protagonists. The discovery of the New Worlds, which was to change the fate of the nations, was reserved for countries

washed by the ocean. Peter, gradually freed from those temporal struggles to which the unceasing ambition of Caesar had condemned him, was to increase in strength from century to century. The light of Caesar was to be slowly extinguished in a Europe split into rival nations, and the successors of Caesar were left with a mere empty show of pomp and power.

### 5.—*Napoleon I*

The soul of Caesar was, however, to revive in many forms. If, instead of broad frescoes, I were to attempt to give detailed pictures of the struggles that the Papacy had to wage with terrestrial powers, I should have to speak of Louis XIV against Innocent XI, and Joseph II against Pius VI. But such pictures would show up but faintly between the sack of Rome by the heretic mercenaries and the forcible removal from Rome of the Vicar of Christ.

I therefore pass on to the quite recent hero, raised by the storm of a revolution, who, without ancestors and by sheer force of ambition, was to collect and condense in his person by a supreme synthesis, all the apparent greatness and all the deep fundamental madness that we know characterise Caesar. It seems as though he had tried to cram into his brief, meteoric career all that the Caesars of old—his inspiration and his models—had taken centuries to realise. As great as the first of the name, the founder of the first western empire; as fascinating as Charlemagne; much superior to the Othos, Barbarossas, Fredericks, and Philips

of the Middle Ages; as determined and sweeping in his plans as Charles V, the little Corsican officer did not pride himself on having received from his ancestors an empire which he decided to make universal; he created this empire himself, and spent one half of his reign in building it up, the other half in losing it. As if his lightning rapidity of action and the intoxication of a super-parvenu compelled him to tear from his life and thoughts all the veils of hypocrisy behind which the hereditary emperors concealed themselves, he showed in all he did, as in a concentric mirror, the soul of Caesar, ever true to type.

It is especially in his dealings with the Pope, which alone interest us here, that he shows this absence of all assumed reticence. In the conflict between Napoleon and Pius VII we find an exact repetition of the eternal struggle between Peter and Caesar. Others, like Charles V and Philippe-le-Bel, had claimed that in persecuting the Pope they were seeking to save the Church from her enemies by affording her protection such as the Popes themselves were too weak to offer; others, like Frederick II and Barbarossa, accused the contemporary popes of being unworthy of the tiara, and claimed the right themselves to appoint the chief of Christianity; others, like Henry IV and Otho, posed as the protectors of the kings against the devouring ambition of the popes; others lastly, like the old Roman emperors, declared themselves the defenders of the empire and the city threatened by dangerous innovators; all, or almost all, covered their actions with a show of lofty disinterestedness.

In the case of Napoleon there was none of this dressing. He had no time for it. Hypocrisy and cunning require patience, and he was too well aware of the necessity for speed. And what excuse could he have found if he had tried? Protecting the Church? Reforming her? Defending the rights of sovereigns or nations? Even he would not have dared to use such words without a smile or without rousing derision. He was faced with a Papacy purged by centuries of trial and splendid victories won in anguish. The Peter he attacked was as much a saint as the first apostle. And so he attacked him without scruple and without dissimulation of his true intention. What he wanted was, quite simply, like a true Caesar, that the Pope should obey him, and place at the service of the victorious master the mysterious and formidable power of the Idea. That was all. There was no beating about the bush with him. We know at once what the conflict was about. The Pope was to lend his prestige to Caesar, for Caesar had need of it to rule mankind.

"My prestige comes from God alone, and I use it only in God's service," answered Peter.

"Then I will break your power and make you my prisoner."

That was, substantially, to what the eleven years dialogue between the Emperor Napoleon and the Pope reduced itself. No, not eleven years, for, before the eleventh, vanquished Caesar was to leave Peter in peace. But what a sublime tragedy of two characters! This time the two personalities are well matched, and both bring to the

struggle the highest qualities of their respective rôles. The one all Caesar ; the other all Peter. A genius and a saint opposed. But as the saint also has genius and, what is more, character, and because he is further strengthened by that mystic and imperishable force transmitted to him by his predecessors, it comes about that in this great duel he excels and dominates his adversary to the point of crushing him. Every time that these two beings find themselves face to face, the crowned general seems like a little boy before the ex-monk. The former has at his back all his policy, diplomacy and army. The latter eludes him as the spirit eludes matter. What can be done against such power? How grasp this burning, elusive flame? The popular imagination, literary fancy, and perhaps also the malignity of pamphleteers have naturally dramatised this sensational conflict and given it legendary form. The best known is the famous scene related by Alfred de Vigny in his book, *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires*, where the Pope, seated and impassive before the raging and loquacious Emperor, contents himself by answering all the flattery and imprecations of his adversary in the two well-known words: *Comediante! Tragediante!*

This account must, of course, be ranked among the legends of history. But what need have we for scenes invented by writers? The true facts are even more splendid and more dramatic. I much prefer to Alfred de Vigny's picturesque narrative some of the irrefutable touches of history, as for example the courteous but intense struggle between the Emperor and the Pope after the coronation

of 1804, the one striving to retain the Pontiff in Paris, the other to return to Eternal Rome.

Bonaparte, having become the Emperor Napoleon, wanted to be crowned by the Pope himself, like the Emperors of the Middle Ages. It was all very well for mere kings to be blessed at Reims by a mere archbishop ; Caesar required the unction of Peter. But instead of going to Rome the Emperor wanted to bring the Pope to Paris. To persuade the Pope to make this long journey, so little in keeping with the dignity of the Sovereign Pontiff, over which Pius VII and his cardinals rightly hesitated and which they were on the point of refusing, Napoleon did not hesitate himself to write to the Pope a very courteous and even humble letter, and to make his government pour out lavish promises which were not to be kept. The Pope then decided to make the journey, in the hope of thereby winning advantages for the Church, such, for example, as the suppression of the organic clauses in the Concordat signed with France ; clauses which the Papacy had always considered mischievous, and which Pius VII had always desired to see annulled. Other advantages were also laid before him, and so successfully that the Sacred College, at first opposed to the Pope's absence, agreed unanimously with the Pope himself that the journey to Paris might now prove useful.

Pius VII, in spite of his great age and with the single object of serving the Church, set out for Paris. But, shrewd as he was good, he foresaw everything, and, as we shall see, took precautions. Indeed the ambitious crowned

soldier had everything to fear, for saintliness does not exclude either prudence or clearness of vision. The precautions of the Pope were not in vain, for scarcely was the coronation ceremony ended than Caesar threw aside all attempt to conceal his real designs. What he wanted was to have Peter under his orders as his almoner or chaplain, and that all the spiritual powers of the Church should be brought to widen and consecrate the material power of the Empire. The same dream as that of Barbarossa and Charles V, but franker and also more cynical. " Why should you remain in Rome ? " the Emperor asked the Pope. " Rome is a dead city without a future, built upon ruins from which life has withdrawn itself. The real capital of the world is Paris. It is here then that the Papacy should have its seat. How much more powerful the Pope will be when supported by the power of the Emperor ! " And, vague promises appearing insufficient, the Pope was already shown the site on which a sumptuous pontifical palace was to be built, on the left bank of the Seine exactly opposite the Tuileries, so that the Emperor and the Pope, separated only by a bridge, might hold daily converse.

As Pius VII did not seem much attracted by this idea of living within sound of the Emperor's voice, he was offered Avignon once more, with a sumptuous court and a rebuilt palace.

The ungrateful Pope once more refused. Then there was no humiliation, no pin-prick that Napoleon's entourage did not inflict upon the august Roman guest, who was given to understand that, whether from choice or by force, he

was to remain in France; if not as a friend, then as a prisoner.

But the Pope had foreseen everything and he made to Napoleon this simple reply:

"Before leaving Italy I signed a formal abdication. It is in the hands of Cardinal Pignatelli, Bishop of Palermo, and the French cannot take it from him. Instead of a Pope there will remain in your hands a poor monk called Barnabas Chiaramonti!"

The sublime *finesse* of the aged Pope this time got the better of the young Emperor's violence. There was nothing to be done. It was of no use to shout and threaten. The Pope, wholly spiritual, eluded material forces. They could, if they liked, kill Barnabas Chiaramonti. That would be an odious and, more important, a useless crime. Another Pope would arise in his place. Napoleon swallowed his anger and resigned himself to the inevitable, all the more readily since the Pope was very popular in France. Even in the eyes of the French people, intoxicated with the glory of Napoleon, the prestige of the Pontiff surpassed that of the Emperor. Napoleon, at the height of his glory, could not, in a moment of vexation, suppress the cry: "They would go a league to see me, but they would go twenty to be blessed by the Pope!" And in these words, torn from the spontaneous sincerity of Caesar, lies perhaps the secret of his thousand-year-old envy of Peter.

So this too recalcitrant guest was allowed to go back to Rome. Not being able to kill or imprison him, Caesar, stifling his rancour, showed himself amiable and generous,

and sent to the Pope, after his return to Rome, a magnificent tiara studded with precious stones as a souvenir of his visit to Paris.

The conqueror of Rivoli and Marengo could not resign himself to the victories of others. He had allowed the Pope to return to Rome, but with the idea of recapturing him and avenging his first check.

Intoxicated by greater victories, the eagle of Austerlitz, Jena and Eylau pounced afresh, with open talons, on his Roman prey. *Aquilla rapex*, said the prophecy of St. Malachi to characterise the reign of Pius VII. This time truly the prophetic formula is striking. Scarcely two years after the return of Pius VII to Rome, and at the first pretext that offered, Napoleon once more took up the struggle against the Pope; this time with more brutality than on the occasion of the coronation.

In the space of two years the star of the conqueror, his famous star still in the ascendant, had risen prodigiously. In 1804, when he had had himself created Emperor by the Senate, it had been necessary to tread warily. His sudden and unexpected elevation to a throne might still be open to dispute, and the coronation by the Sovereign Pontiff was necessary in the eyes of the universe. Moreover, his enemies had not been entirely crushed. It was therefore necessary to play the Pope skilfully, to try to retain him if possible, but not to break with him, and especially not to do him any violence. With Europe not yet conquered it would have been maladroit to treat with violence the successor of St. Peter, the spiritual sovereign of thousands

of souls, the man for whom even those benighted Parisians were capable of "going twenty leagues to be blessed."

But now the time had come to doff the mask of deference, and reveal Caesar in all his glory. The world was so subjugated to its master that if, by chance, the Pope wanted to abdicate and provoke a new Conclave, the cardinals would not find a new place in which to assemble, and in any case none of them would be able to get there.

That is why, in 1807, Napoleon showed to the Pope a side of himself he had not dared to show in 1804—the absolute, prepotent Caesar. Henceforward the Pope was to become one of Caesar's functionaries, and, if not his functionary, his prisoner. Moreover, the Papal States had no further reason to exist; they were to be incorporated in the Empire, and Rome was to be the chief town of a mere department. This was the logical conclusion of the whole Caesarian idea from the time of Justinian, and even before. And it is in this that, even in his very brutality, the Corsican *parvenu* is symbolical.

The pretext, once found, was followed by the continental blockade. The Pope, declaring himself independent, and remaining so by right even if despoiled and made prisoner, refused to obey the orders of the Emperor, who demanded that the ports of the Pontifical States should be closed to English vessels, like those of the Empire. Pius VII knew to what he was exposing himself if he resisted. But he also knew that he was Pope, and that he ought not to obey except when constrained to do so by brute force, which changes obedience into necessity. In vain the Emperor sent to the

Pope pressing invitations, then orders, then injunctions. The Pope did not flinch for a single moment. And in this poignant duel the immanent splendour of Peter reduces to meanness the turbulent glory of Caesar. From that time we witness scenes of spoliation and violence which, leaving aside the blow and spitting of Anagni, recall the brutalities of Philippe-le-Bel; with this difference, however: that the Pope of 1809 was not of those that Dante would have dared to consign to hell, nor even to purgatory. He was one of the most incontestable saints in all the long line of St. Peter's successors.

The order was then given by the Emperor to General Miollis to seize the Pontifical States and imprison the Pope in his apartments in the Quirinal. This unparalleled outrage occurred on the 2nd of February, 1808, and the imperial authorities took in hand the administration of the Eternal City, without yet daring to proclaim its annexation. But the valiant old man shut up in the Quirinal still retained a few devoted and faithful souls and, above all, his full moral authority over all Romans and all Christianity. For more than a year, despite the daily persecutions to which he was subjected, he remained the sovereign and continued to issue orders. This patience in the man who was resisting him in the name of eternal patience was too much for the ephemeral Caesar, and in March, 1809, he finally decided to decree the reunion of the Papal States with the French Empire. The Pope then, conquered but not enslaved, decided to act against his enemy as Gregory VII, Boniface IX, and Innocent IV had acted. He launched a Bull of

Excommunication which on 10th June was posted on all the outside walls of St. Peter's and S. Giovanni in Laterano. The effect in Rome and throughout the Catholic world was tremendous. And this moral effect was due first and foremost to the prestige of Pius VII, whom already, during his life, all Europe venerated as a saint.

The imperial agents of Rome were dumbfounded by this reply, which, though purely verbal, succeeded in throwing them into confusion. Yet the effect was not decisive and, although seriously troubled, the Empire was not shaken by this measure.

Chateaubriand, in his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, takes Pius VII to task for not having dared to push the matter to a conclusion by formulating a personal excommunication of Napoleon as Gregory VII had done with Henry IV. This great writer says :

". . . The Bull betrayed weakness; Napoleon, though included among *the spoilers* of the Church, was not expressly mentioned by name. It was a period of terror; these timid men took refuge in all security of mind in this absence of individual excommunication. They should have fought with thunder. They should have returned thunderbolt for thunderbolt since they had not made up their minds to defend themselves; they should have stopped the religious services, closed the doors of the temples, forbidden access to the churches, ordered the priests to cease the administration of the sacrament. Whether the century was ripe or not for such high action, it would have been well to try it; Gregory VII would not have missed the opportunity . . . the Emperor, by a complete excommunication, would have found himself in inextricable difficulties. Violence can close the churches but it cannot open them; the people cannot be forced to pray nor the priest to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Napoleon never had to face the full force of his opponent's strength . . ."

It is typical of the magnificent vanity of Chateaubriand, that he should feel himself called upon to give advice to the Holy See. In reality, if Pius VII refused to consign all Christianity to the moral torment represented by the closing of the churches and the cessation of religious activity, it was because he knew well that such drastic measures would be as useless as they would be mischievous. Sooner or later, and no doubt sooner, the adventurer Caesar would be crushed beneath the weight of his own mistakes. The great saint and psychologist who commanded the whole world from the height of St. Peter's throne, whence all mundane things appear *sup specie aeterni*, could make no mistake as to the destiny of Napoleon. When Gregory VII was struggling against Henry IV, and Boniface IX against Barbarossa, the Empire represented a real and enduring danger, in itself and owing to the whole atmosphere of the time. It was not only an Empire that had to be fought; it was the imperial idea, so firmly rooted in contemporary souls that the greatest poet of Europe was a little later to extol it. In the time of Pius VII things were no longer the same, and the deep Pontiff could not make a mistake. Charles V, as Caesar, was already an anachronism. This one was a sort of gambler, inopportune and outrageous; an heroic madman who by sheer genius and audacity had re-awakened for his own glorification a whole vanished world. But once the madman had gone, or was shorn of his artificial splendour, the whole edifice would crash down like a scaffolding after a public ceremony, while the Church remains eternal. What are five or six years—perhaps more, perhaps less—for her? That was why Pius VII resigned

himself to a few years of patience, and that is what Chateaubriand, typical of his century, could not understand but could only blame. Pius VII then accepted the rôle of martyr to which the imperial anger condemned him.

During the night of the 5th–6th July, 1809, a certain General Radet accomplished in the name of the Emperor the valiant gesture of attacking the Quirinal, containing a few old men at prayer. They climbed over the garden walls; doors were smashed in with hatchets, and rough soldiers laid hands on the Pope and the Cardinal Bacca. They were dragged in silence into carriages made ready beforehand, and before the day broke or any Roman was aware of the abduction, the Pope and his minister, dressed in black to evade notice, were already on the road to Florence, on their way to captivity. They took forty-one days to go from Rome to Savona, where the Pope arrived on 16th August, after a journey which even to-day would try the endurance of a young man. The Pope was lodged in the Prefecture under the discreet but unceasing surveillance of the imperial authorities. Pius VII did not seek or request any mitigation of his lot, and, finding himself a prisoner, behaved like a prisoner. But, even though Savona was a Prefecture of the Empire, Napoleon thought it still too far from Paris and the Pope too far outside his direct influence. Communication between Savona and Paris took too long, for Caesar had not the patience of Peter. He wanted to move quickly, for he was conscious that he was not eternal. Orders were given to take the Pope to

Fontainebleau, where he arrived at midnight on 20th June, 1812, after a fatiguing journey.

Volumes have been written about this famous sojourn at Fontainebleau, and the inevitable apologists have pleaded Napoleon's cause, for Caesar, even though dead, has his admirers and will continue to have them so long as any vestiges of the imperialist mentality continue to exist. It has even been claimed that Napoleon behaved admirably towards " his guest," and that Pius VII made no complaint. It would need little to make them add that the sojourn of the Pope in the celebrated forest, and his walks round the lake, famous for its carp, constituted for the grand old man of Rome an excellent holiday provided by the filial devotion and inexhaustible charity of the Emperor! Let us not waste a single moment over these inanities of archivists. The one undeniable fact is that the Pope was first robbed of his States, then taken by force to Savona, and, again by force, transferred from Savona to Fontainebleau, where he lived in captivity and did not cease to protest.

Whether in his interviews with Pius VII Napoleon shouted or talked more courteously, whether he jostled him or not, and whether Pius VII contented himself with smiling indulgently at the anger and irritation of this spoilt child of fortune whom fortune was on the point of betraying, may provide amusement for novelists and chroniclers who have no eye for the fundamental truth of the story, which is, in essence, that of Caesar's violence against Peter. Now this violence is incontestable, whether it was

or was not as brutal as that perpetrated by Philippe-le-Bel against Boniface VIII, or Charles V against Clement VII. And the reasons for this violence are still the same; the same as we have seen for several centuries through all the incarnations of Caesar; namely, the desire to subject the Church to the will and interests of the lay power, and the perpetual resistance of the Church to such a claim. It is still the interminable quarrel over investiture, in which the Papacy has struggled for centuries against the Empire; and this time the Emperor dared what neither Henry IV, Barbarossa, nor Frederick II had dared—he abducted the Pope and made him prisoner. But the prison was not eternal, nor was the Empire. This time it passed very quickly, and after the battle of Leipzig, a year and a few months after the captivity of Fontainebleau, it was the Emperor himself, on the eve of his defeat, who came to beseech the Pope to return to Rome and take back his States, threatened by Austria and the kingdom of Naples. Peter returned to Rome through triumphal arches while the Emperor passed on towards his doom.

Thus ended the supreme struggle openly waged between the unshakable Church and the feverish dream of universal Empire. Chateaubriand wonders how Napoleon could have committed such a mistake:

"What had he to gain by these tricks played on the clergy? Was it the moral and religious power of the Holy See that Napoleon feared? But by persecuting the Papacy was he not augmenting that power? What, then, was Bonaparte's motive? The evil side of his genius, his inability to rest; always a gambler, when he was not staking emperors on a card he would stake a fantasy."

It was not merely a Napoleonic "fantasy," as Chateaubriand rather superficially thinks, and it was not merely "the evil side of his genius" that drove on the ephemeral Emperor of 1804–1814. It was the inevitable destiny of all the Caesars, hereditary or children of fortune, that prompted their desire to seize for their material aggrandisement the supreme and imponderable strength represented by the power of Peter. Napoleon, the last of the great world-conquerors, condensed into a few years the whole century-old history of the Papacy and the Empires.

### 6.—*Napoleon III*

Yet a few years after the death of Napoleon I a new Emperor arose, bearing the same name as the adversary of Pius VII and seeming to provide a concrete and substantial denial of all we have said in the preceding pages with regard to the perpetual struggle of Caesar against Peter. A new Caesar appeared, who not only did not once attack the Pope of Rome; who not only did not cause him any anxiety, but who, moreover, during his whole reign and before his reign, posed before his country, before the entire world and before history, as the defender and servant of Peter, to whom he did not for a single moment cease to show, at least outwardly, filial submission and unfailing loyalty. This is, at first sight, such a flat contradiction of what to a great extent forms the very substance of this work that it would be impossible to attempt to pass it over in silence and treat with disdain the person and reign of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, later for eighteen years Napoleon III, Emperor of the French.

We must not forget that under his presidency, as well as under his reign, there occurred events of first importance in the history of the world, and particularly in the history of the Papacy. His actions, then, are important, and touch us all the more nearly since they are almost part of contemporary history; and most of the events of this man's time through their reaction on politics and literature have to some extent intimately and vividly affected our public life. That is why the imaginations of our fathers, and even our own, have been impressed by the events of which he was the direct cause much more than by the events of earlier history; and he is one of those who have contributed most to create in the minds of men of the present day that legend we have repeatedly mentioned, namely, the existence of a fundamental connection between the Pope and the Emperor. Certain celebrated verses of Victor Hugo in *Les Châtiments*, *Les Contemplations*, and *L'année terrible* still vibrate in our memories, and it will doubtless take a long time to extirpate completely from the popular mind a mistake so picturesquely driven home. It is important, then, that we should pause to consider the political formation of the Second Empire and this relatively recent Emperor. We shall then see that, far from contradicting the general psychology of the various Caesars who have played such a great rôle in the history of the Popes, the attitude of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, on the other hand, only serves to confirm it under other forms, and with other results.

It is generally thought that the second French Republic, that of 1848, born, like the other, out of a revolution, was

a republic in reality, whereas it was a republic only in name, and after four months of sterile agitation found itself completely suppressed by the coalition of all the conservative parties.

If we look at the matter closely we shall not be surprised. It was indeed inevitable that a too sudden revolution, with doctrines for which the time was not yet ripe, should be succeeded by a violent reaction. Let us go back in imagination to that stormy period of history. It was thirty-three years after the Empire, scarcely fifty years after the great Revolution. The memories of those two titanic periods were not then, as they are for us to-day, dead things to be read about in books ; for most men—for all old men especially—these memories lived in the eye and in the memory. Some had seen the passing of the tumbril bearing Louis XVI or heard thunder the voice of Danton ; others had mourned relations led to the guillotine ; many had looked upon the legendary hat of that strange man who had shaken Europe. And young men born after 1815 had listened in their cradles to first-hand stories which evoked in their wondering souls one of the most tremendous disturbances of history.

And now, suddenly, amongst these people touched by the finger of the first revolution, a second revolution broke loose, equally shattering in the beginning with the first. And once more wild, fanatical men arise. Once more re-echo the voices of tribunes, mingling with the crash of arms. Once more, in a word, the republic is proclaimed. And this time it was not only in France. All Europe was set ablaze

by this fresh conflagration. Rome demanded liberty; Frankfort revolted; Baden, in the voice of Sture, proclaimed a republican constitution; Berlin and Magdebourg rose against the King of Prussia; the Emperor of Austria, driven out by revolution, fled to Moravia; Kossuth declared the independence of Hungary; Manin roused the Republic of Venice; Florence acclaimed a democratic parliament; Carlo Poerio was at Naples, Ruggero Settimo in Sicily. Everywhere where the Treaty of Vienna claimed to have established the foundations of the old régime revolution raised its head and threatened to transform Europe into one vast social republic. Imagine what must have been the state of mind of the princes, ministers, aristocrats, plutocrats, high officials, and all those who in some degree enjoyed the advantages of the social state. Immediately they saw flash once more before their eyes the still hot memories of 1793 and 1797. Enlightened by experience, they were, so to speak, in terror of the Terror. From that time all who feared the change—and these are always in the majority—all those conservative by temperament and timorous by nature, without there being any need to drive or control them, coalesced spontaneously to strangle at sight what they call in the language of the period "the Hydra of Anarchy." It was all very human.

This explains the pitiless cruelty of the repression which throughout Europe followed the first attempts at revolution; repression, of which the most bloody example occurred in Paris after the famous days of June.

But, for the Conservatives it was not enough to repress with severity the attempt at social transformation. It was necessary henceforward to stamp out revolution finally in every state of Europe, and particularly in France. It was necessary without delay to organise all the conservative forces into an indestructible alliance, to solidify their power and render any future revolution impossible. Such was the conception of the Anti-revolutionaries. And it must be admitted that from the beginning, favoured by the unrest and the rampant frenzy which marked the beginning of the Revolution, the Anti-revolutionaries had a fair field and met with marked success. It must also be admitted that the Revolution paved the way for its own defeat. It showed itself ardent and enthusiastic, but naïve and ingenuous. It was everywhere led by well-meaning souls, tribunes, heroes and poets, but actually it was without organisation.

The anti-revolutionary party, on the other hand, had the advantage of firm cohesion and elaborate organisation. It had on its side the beneficiaries of the social state that was to be destroyed—all the functionaries, all the dignitaries, all the ruling minds. Finally it was supported at this moment by the oldest, strongest, most indestructible of human organisations—the Church, with her innumerable ramifications of European clergy.

By the natural logic of events Rome became, in fact, the central flame of the Counter-revolution. Pius IX himself, in spite of his mental leanings, could not resist this logic and the pressure of his entourage. He who, at the

beginning of his reign, had been proclaimed the most liberal sovereign of Europe, became, by force of circumstances, the most vigorous champion of the established order. Feeling himself, moreover, threatened in his own domains by the revolutionary rising, he brought to bear against it all the strength of the Church, and the powerful organisation of the clergy was set in motion.

Now, of all the countries of Europe, in which was the Revolution most formidable? In France. It was in France, then, that the most tenacious and most clear-sighted effort of the anti-revolutionary party was made. Since the Concordat of 1802 the clergy of France had slowly regained all their influence. Further, the re-awakening of religious feeling brought about throughout Europe by the Romantic Movement, and which had acquired such great prestige through men like Chateaubriand, Manzoni, Lamartine, and Hugo himself, had driven from men's minds the effects of the old Voltairian scepticism still represented by Béranger; so much so that France of 1815–1848 had in no way fallen into anti-clericanism; on the contrary, a vast Catholic party, directed by men of high worth, had been formed.

One of these men especially—a man of great organising genius—exerted considerable influence over the events of this period; the Comte de Montalembert. A great orator, a talented writer, a tactician all the more powerful in that he was disinterested and inspired by sincere faith, Montalembert became the true author of the Counter-revolution. As soon as the rising of the

people became known Montalembert clearly saw that this sudden explosion would strike terror into the timorous public. A great Conservative and Catholic party rose from the ruins of a still-born revolution. So much so that from the end of June, 1848—that is to say, scarcely four months after the fall of Louis Philippe and only three months after the proclamation of the republic—this republic was nothing but a name.

What form was the Counter-revolution to take? monarchy? dictatorship? empire? or simply a conservative republic? Montalembert and his entourage cared little. For them the important thing was to stamp out the revolutionary spirit; the rest would depend on eventualities.

Now there lived in France at this time a man of bold ambition, who marched towards his goal with untiring patience, obstinacy, and confidence. He bore a name which might dazzle the people. Montalembert did not hesitate. He at once deserted the descendants of Louis XVI and the Duke of Orleans. It was to Louis Napoleon Bonaparte that he brought the support of the vast Catholic party, thus assuring to this party the future protection of the imperial candidate. This, I believe, constitutes the historical psychology of the famous Republic of 1848, and of the Second Empire which was to emerge from it. This is how the intriguing Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, ex-*Carbonaro*, ex-conspirator in Romagna, became, as the result of his political ambition, the protégé of Montalembert, and to all appearances the protector of Pius IX.

It seems, then, as though Napoleon III arrived in the middle of the nineteenth century to give the lie to the history of that uninterrupted conflict dating from the Middle Ages; and most of those who read this book, especially in France, will not fail, from the opening pages, to bring forward as an objection the memory of the man who passes as the last Caesar; whose ambition it was to assume the name and prestige of Caesar, and who all his life showed himself to be obsessed by the historical and political figure of the first founder of the Roman Empire, even to the point of becoming his biographer and apologist.

In reality these are only vain appearances, and fundamentally the contradiction does not exist.

In the first place, it is wrong to treat Louis Napoleon Bonaparte as Caesar. He only possessed his title, his mantle and trappings. The heir to glory which was not his own and a name which was hardly his own, he benefited by the circumstances which caused to converge upon him all the inevitable reaction that followed the resounding fall of Louis Philippe and the clumsy insurrections of 1848.

In himself he was nothing but an ambitious man, desirous to reach his goal by no matter what means, by no matter what route. He would have plotted with the *Carbonari* or with the Socialists, had that been the best road to power. He finally plotted with the Conservatives and Catholics, but, at heart, with the same indifference. As there grew up around him, and especially around his name, a syndicate of ambitions like his own, he allowed himself to be borne along by them without counting the cost.

Among these ambitions some were very noble and very disinterested, like that of Montalembert ; some were more worldly and restless, like those of Morny, Persigny, or Troplong. He used them all indifferently and indiscriminately. He was, in fact, nothing but an opportunist, and a conspicuous example of the Balzac type of hero.

Now since, owing to his name, the title of Emperor stood at the close of his career, he seized it and adopted it as, had it been an easier course, he would have adopted that of Dictator, Protector, or King.

Thus he became Emperor in name. But Caesar, no.

A man can, indeed, only be Caesar in one of two ways : by heredity or by genius. By heredity like Nero, Marcus Aurelius, Constantine, Theodosius, Henry IV, Barbarossa, Frederick II, Charles V, Joseph II, etc. ; by genius like the first of the Caesars, like Theodoric, like Charlemagne, like the first Napoleon ; all of whom won power by right of victory, and imposed themselves upon the admiration and obedience of the nations.

Napoleon III belonged to neither of these classes. His heredity was more than suspect, besides having lapsed. The fact that the uncle had possessed astonishing genius, and had won by sheer glorious achievement an ephemeral throne that he could only occupy for a short time, did not imply that any nephew of his should later have a right to that throne.

Napoleon's Empire had been a dazzling adventure. The adventure had ended with the end of the glory, and

the fall had been as legitimate as the elevation—perhaps more so.

Real legitimacy is based on an uninterrupted line of successors to the same possessions and a universally recognised historical right. This was the case with the Hohenstaufen, and later the Habsbourgs. The son of Hortense de Beauharnais, the nephew of the ex-artillery lieutenant, was in no way Caesar by heredity.

And he was still less Caesar by genius. Of genius he had none. We are quite sure of this to-day. Naturally, attempts have recently been made to vindicate him, as everyone has been vindicated; but the attempts have failed. No doubt some of his enemies, especially the terrible Victor Hugo, have exaggerated his vices and his crimes and, in doing so, have enhanced his importance, unworthy of so much honour. In reality he was a mediocrity—mediocre in everything. Successful mediocrities are met with every day and in all careers, even that of the throne. Napoleon III was one of these.

His only outstanding qualities were his tenacity of ambition and his will to succeed. Once at his goal, he showed himself the bungler he had always been. Vacillating and nebulous; a fatalist and a dreamer; not knowing what he wanted apart from the crown, he drifted, half in a dream, now swayed by the self-interested advice of his ministers, now by the incongruous caprices of his wife. Personally he had not a single clear idea, and wavered between socialism and clericalism, Auguste Comte and Montalembert, Fourrier and Charlemagne.

This crowned *parvenu*, a mixture of Rastignac and Triplepatte, had, apart from his imperial mantle, nothing in common with the turbulent and formidable Caesars who for so many centuries had dashed themselves against the unshakable rock placed in Rome by St. Peter. He was neither of their race nor temperament. It is not surprising, then, that he did not act as they had done. And yet, even in his mediocrity, even in his parody of an Empire, he showed towards the Papacy a state of mind analogous to that of the true Caesars he tried to imitate. I mean that he wished above all things to exploit the spiritual power of the Pope for his own ends. But, whereas Barbarossa, Charles V, or Napoleon attempted to exploit this power by dominating and ruling it, he, weaker and wrapped up in intrigue, used it in reality while appearing to render it service. He understood from the first that for him to succeed in his political ambitions in France it was necessary that he should be protected by the Pope and the Catholic party. He therefore made a pretence of being himself the protector of the Papacy. Incapable of playing the rôle of Charles V or of Frederick II, or, indeed, of his uncle of the eagle eye—*aquila rapex*—he found it convenient to ape Charlemagne or Constantine. There was, however, this essential difference—that Constantine and Charlemagne brought to the great Popes Silvester and Adrian the decisive support of their imperial power. They were not only true emperors, all-powerful in themselves and through their ancestors. and in consequence capable of lending the Papacy valuable and indisputable aid, the consequences of which for future history were to be immense. They also acted from sincere

impulse, driven by their religious conviction; one a recent convert with all the enthusiasm of the neophyte, the other a true Christian knight, determined to conquer and die with his faithful companions for the cross of the Saviour and the Church founded by St. Peter. It would be ridiculous even to attempt to compare with them Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who, once he had hitched his fortunes to those of the Church, was merely a rather paltry and very questionable intriguer, needing the Church at a time when the Church could have done without him, approaching Rome much as a candidate approaches his electors. His good faith, and even his faith, were not even dim echoes of the splendid religious impulses that swept away Constantine or Charlemagne, for the ex-conspirator of Romagna and the vague socialist dreamer of the Tuileries never concealed his religious incredulity and fundamental anti-clericalism.

It would therefore be a cruel irony to apply to him the words *Romanae ecclesiae ensis clypeusque,* which were written for Charlemagne, for his apparent devotion, and his not even apparent devotions were merely frigid comedy. As always happens with anything insincere, such an attitude did more harm than good—to the Pope first and then to himself.

This calculated exploitation of the Pontifical power was indeed disastrous to the Papacy. No blame attaches to the unfortunate, sorely-tried Pius IX for having at times lost his head a little in face of all the material evils by which he felt his reign threatened. But it is true that one of the reasons for his unpopularity among the

people of Rome and Italy; and the chief cause of the unjust manifestations of hatred to which his person and memory were subjected, both during his life and after his death, was his having summoned, or rather tolerated, the presence in Rome of a foreign army. There can be no doubt that the re-entry of the Pope into Rome in 1849 to the sound of the trumpets of the French expeditionary force, and, later, the corps of occupation in non-Italian uniform which installed itself in the Eternal City contrary to the unanimous feelings of that town, all contributed to weave round good Pius IX a false legend that he was a despot, and the enemy of Italy.

We know what lamentable popular abuse from the bridge of S. Angelo profaned the removal of his mortal remains in 1878. It was horrible, vile, and inexcusable, I agree. This great Pope who had so sincerely loved his people deserved very different obsequies. But, unfortunately, appearances had deceived this fiery people. Although posterity can readjust all things, the people who are making living history cannot be swayed by the passions of the hour, often founded on appearances. And so good Pius IX passed, in the eyes of the people, as having condemned Rome to suffer foreign soldiery. In this way the self-interested protection offered by Napoleon III had not only *not* saved Pius IX from the inevitable, but had sullied his reign and tarnished his memory; for Caesar can only injure Peter even when he affects to aid him. For the rest, this false Caesar, the feverish imitator of an adventurer-emperor, did even more harm to himself by his insincere

Roman policy. The corps of occupation in Rome, and the memory of 1849, were to do him more injury than they did the Pope himself; for, after all, the Papacy recovers from everything, especially from its occasional political mistakes. Neither Napoleon III nor his imperialistic policy ever recovered from their mistakes in Italy. As was justly said by Jules Favre in 1860, it was impossible to " emancipate in the north and enslave in the south," and " This double game played on the banks of the Po and Tiber " ended in the loss on the Tiber of the benefit of the good achieved beside the Po.

Napoleon III, by his Roman policy, finally compromised the result of his Lombard policy. He understood nothing of the real Roman, or rather Italian question, and by opposing with his rifles the inevitable march of Italy towards her capital he obliterated from the minds of the men of that period the memory of Solferino and Magenta. It was clearly seen in 1870 how, had Italy as a whole been able to rise in our defence, the fate of the world might perhaps have been changed. But we will not delay over historical hypotheses. What remains beyond doubt is that the artificial alliance between the Pope and the Emperor, a real pope and a false emperor, was mutually disastrous. It brought about the downfall of the Emperor and his Empire. The Pope suffered from it, and his memory still suffers. That the Pope at least expiated it by the martyrdom of a life of perpetual torment, by the nobility of his character and by the very ingenuousness of a purely political, and therefore entirely human, mistake in

no way dims the greatness and glory of his spiritual pontificate.

### *7.—The Last Gestures of Caesar*

It was left for coming events to show once more, before the complete disappearance of the old empires, a supreme phase of the struggle between Caesar and Peter; between one of the most woeful successors of Caesar and one of the most splendid of the successors of Peter. I speak of Francis Joseph, the last Emperor of Austria, and the admirable Pius X.

Strictly speaking one might, from the merely historical point of view, refuse to Francis Joseph of Habsbourg the title of Caesar, since literally speaking the Holy Roman Empire ceased to exist in 1806, and the last sovereign of the family to which Charles V had belonged was simply a Catholic king, and no longer Emperor of the Romans. But the possession or non-possession of the title is only of academic importance, and the Emperor to whom we owe the declaration of the disastrous Great War—especially disastrous for him and his people—certainly belongs, by his long heredity and the horrors of his long reign, to the race and mentality of Caesar—a degenerate Caesar, it is true, and devoid of genius, but of the family nevertheless. He proved this by his conduct towards the Church of Rome in the Conclave of 1903, when a henchman of the successor of the Roman Emperors suddenly rose to oppose his veto to the possible election of a pope. The cry of indignation that rose immediately from the Sacred College showed what the Church thought of this anachronistic and insolent gesture.

This was the last time the tarnished sceptre, that still remained for a few more years in Caesar's grip, was brandished over Peter. Must we believe, as some have done, that this was Caesar's last success, and that, without this imperial veto, the Church would have had another pope? I do not think so, and for my part I am firmly convinced of the contrary. Now that both the great Pope and the great Cardinal are dead, as also their contemporaries, we need no longer be afraid of wounding anyone, but can tell the whole truth and evoke all the memories.

I have lived in Rome since this time and have spoken of this famous Conclave with eye-witnesses; notably with an illustrious one who has since vanished—Cardinal Mathieu, the author of a book full of colour and life.

It is no secret that Cardinal Mathieu showed towards Pius X a merely official deference, while he had a sincere regard for Cardinal Rampolla, whose faithful supporter he had been. Well, Cardinal Mathieu, with whom I have several times had the honour of discussing the Conclave of 1903, always assured me with great earnestness that the veto of the Most Catholic Emperor in no way affected the result of the ballot.

In reality the Austro-Hungarian Cardinal who represented the rancours and pretensions of the last of the Caesars showed lack of clear-sightedness and serenity, and allowed himself to be hustled by a vain fear. The veto which he carried in his pocket was only to be publicly produced if it became obvious that Cardinal Rampolla would carry the day. Several votes had already been given, without

Cardinal Puzyna giving any sign of the commission with which he was charged. At last, after great efforts on the part of his adherents, the former Secretary of State of Leo XIII had acquired 29 votes when there were still 42 to be given. At that moment the Austro-Hungarian cardinal took fright and, afraid of being too late if he waited longer, produced his veto.

According to the admission of Cardinal Mathieu himself, a faithful friend of the great Rampolla, the latter had received the maximum of votes upon which he could rely, and all hopes on his behalf were vain. It is even probable that if the College of Cardinals had intended to vote for the secretary of the late Pope they would have done so then, after the veto and because of the veto ; so great was the indignation of all. The proof of this is that at the subsequent election Rampolla gained 30 votes. But already another was marked down. The gradual rise in favour of Cardinal Sarto had been shown in all the preceding ballots, and he had risen gradually from 5 to 24 votes. His place amongst the successors of Peter was already assured. Caesar's henchman, by his somewhat precipitate gesture, only succeeded in compromising the prestige of his Emperor, and drawing down upon his master and himself the eloquent and haughty protest of Cardinal Rampolla, backed by the whole Sacred College. The first act of Pius X immediately after his election was to suppress for ever this right of veto, which, on the threshold of new times, was a relic of the medieval struggle of force against the idea. It was Caesar's supreme defeat before his final death. . . .

I am wrong. The Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria won yet another success against Pius X ; a success indirect, involuntary and even unconscious, though tragic ; it was the cause of his death.

To all who read this book I have no need to repeat what a great and saintly pope Pius X was, for he is still so near to us. He is without doubt one of the most splendid, stirring figures in the history of the Church and of the world. Inspired by an ardent faith—*ignis ardens*, indeed—which raised him in a perpetual miracle of energy and clear-sightedness above ephemeral disturbance, he radiated goodness to an extent which made him the veritable father of his flock, and the measure of his love was, to quote a well-known saying, love without measure. It is doubtless this smiling, overflowing goodness that has deceived some superficial observers from outside the Church, and made them think that this supreme apostle, worthy successor of the first of the apostles, was merely a good-natured country priest. Perhaps he was. There is nothing surprising in the word if by it is meant that, in its inexhaustible charity, he was like those obscure and saintly consolers of the village who are so numerous in the Church, passing their lives in unstinted devotion to their little flock, dying poor and worn out, and leaving upon those who mourn them the tangible impression of holiness.

This force of charity and power of sympathy that the country priest lavishes in his little moral domain Pope Pius X infinitely multiplied and spread throughout the earth. His whole soul vibrated in response to the breath

of suffering humanity. He was, without doubt, of all the popes the one who, in courage, robust goodness, and sweep of soul, approached nearest to the fisher of Galilee. Every time I saw his pale, virile, yet gentle face, his deep, tender eyes, and his smile tempered with pity, I was moved as before some being of a higher order; and I remember the tears trembling in my eyes when, one beautiful April day in 1909, in the decorated basilica, I saw him suddenly seize the banner of France brought for the beatification of Jeanne d'Arc and unexpectedly and spontaneously kiss it. He was full of these sudden, splendid inspirations, which mark heroes, geniuses and saints. A saint he indeed was in all the dynamic force of the word, and with all the love towards men and sympathy with their sorrows that it implies.

I leave, then, to the imagination the feelings of this great-hearted father when the ominous shadows told him of the imminence of a great war. It was at the end of July, 1914. Austria's ultimatum to Serbia and Germany's obvious support of her Ally left no doubt as to the bellicose intentions of the Central Empires. Pius X, apart from being well informed by his nuncios, possessed too much intuition not to foresee what a calamity was about to strike the world. Those who lived near him at that time know that he was moved to tears, and passed whole hours praying for poor menaced Europe. Meanwhile, it appears, the ambassador of the Emperor Francis Joseph came to ask him to bless the "necessary" enterprise of the Central Powers. Pius X, much surprised and even indignant

that he should be asked to give his moral support in this way, said: "I bless peace, not war!"

Seeing that all efforts to arrest the march of events willed by the two Emperors were now vain, he felt his already tottering health weaken under the anxiety and pain. But a more poignant trial awaited him. Immediately after the declaration of war the seminarists of the belligerent nations had to leave Rome to join the forces of their respective countries. These young men, ready, in obedience to the law, to exchange the soutane for a uniform, asked to kiss the Pope's ring before setting out on their adventure. The doctors, foreseeing that such an audience would be dangerous for the august invalid, attempted to oppose it. But Pius X was not the man to shirk his mission, even in the face of death. He decided to receive personally all the ecclesiastics of Rome, secular and regular, who were to go to the front. On the same day he saw in the morning those of the one side and in the evening those of the other. He received them standing, outwardly calm, and, though he felt his heart sink and the tears rise to his eyes, fortified them by his own courage. These young disciples of the God of Love, condemned by fate to fight one against the other—what a terrible symbol of war, and what an ordeal for an ardent and sympathetic soul like this already sainted Pope! The same evening he had to retire to his bed. The grief of Pius X was so great that his too full heart burst . . . his last days were a martyrdom, that of one dying for mankind in his impotence to save them from the scourge. He never ceased

to pray and weep, and left this world, not like a dying flame but like a broken lamp.

What terrible and splendid historical poetry there is in this successor of Peter, one of the finest of them all, dying of the immense grief caused in him by the greatest war ever provoked in this world, the result of the ambition of the last Caesar. . . . We know to-day the fate of the Caesars and Empires which, ten years ago, covered two-thirds of Europe; while at this very moment the Church is preparing to place upon her altars the name and image of a great Pope, like unto those of the early centuries, whose prevision of his people's misfortunes killed him.

But in truth this last example, so impressive in its simplicity, and in its reality still living for us as a sort of final apotheosis, completes the demonstration of this truth I have wished to prove, through so many centuries of tests—that between Peter and Caesar, in spite of a too widespread prejudice to the contrary, there has never been collaboration, succession, or co-operation but always a struggle; now courteous, now ardent; now visible, now concealed, in which the two great principles that have ruled the world have, since the coming of Jesus Christ, perpetually clashed: force and the idea; or to be more precise, pride and charity. All those historians, blinded by superficial regrets, who have persisted in seeking in the Church the continuation of the Roman Empire have understood nothing of the character of Peter and Caesar from the first century down to the present day, and the poets who have tried to find in Peter and Caesar—"those

two halves of God"—two forces working in common for the reign of justice upon earth, be they even the greatest of all poets like Dante, have been blinded by their imagination, or rather by their passion, forgetting that one was to be by destiny the contrary of the other, and that Peter had come to Rome, not to confirm the reign of the sword, but to do battle against it in the name of Jesus.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE "ROMAN QUESTION"

### 1.—*The Origin of the Question and the Historical Case for the Holy See*

THE struggle between Caesar and Peter, of which we have examined the broad outline, leads us naturally to the "Roman Question."

"The Roman Question" implies the conflict of right and fact which has been waged during the last century between Italy and the Papacy regarding the possession of the Eternal City; on the one hand the natural capital of Italy, and on the other, belonging, as we have seen, to the popes and their traditional power since the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne, and even, according to some, since the Emperor Constantine.

The question may be stated as follows:

1. Has Italy, having regained consciousness of her national unity, the right to possess her capital, Rome, for the realisation of this unity?

2. Has the Papacy, installed in Rome from the time of the apostle Peter, and having poured out in Rome the blood of so many martyr popes, saved Rome after the fall of the Empire, restored her after disasters and ruin, raised her to her present greatness, been enthroned there since 800

with the consent of all Europe and reigned gloriously in that city for eleven hundred years, the right to maintain in Rome the power it has so long exercised there ?

Before replying to these two questions, it will be well first to examine the position of the two sides in the light of history.

But before going further it is important to note that this conflict of two legitimate rights, which has remained pacific and theoretical for the last fifty years, even becoming daily more pacific, has nothing in common with the centuries of struggle waged by Caesar against Peter. When the Emperor, whoever he might be—Henry IV or Charles V, Barbarossa or Napoleon—tried to seize Rome or to subjugate the Pope of Rome, it was world empire he coveted, and his special aim was to crush or domesticate for his own ends, solely to serve his own ambitions, the imponderable power of Peter.

This was the struggle of an omnipotent man against one more powerful still, although the latter may often have appeared weaker than his enemy.

The relations between Italy and the Church are quite another matter. Firstly, there is here no question of personal ambition ; further, in the sharpest phase of the conflict, the king who apparently headed the movement which attracted towards Rome the longings and armies of all Italy was merely the visible representative of the ideas and tendencies of a whole nation. The " Roman Question " was established well before his time, and others than he would have undertaken the march on Rome if

by chance he had refused. It will be seen, then, that the situation is an entirely new one in the history of the Papacy, and in no way reminiscent of the ambition of the different Caesars whose history we have traced. In reality, it is not a man attacking the temporal power of the Holy See; not a Victor Emmanuel II, a Garibaldi, a Cavour, a Mazzini, or any other. It is an almost unanimous people, a people desiring to become a nation like all the great neighbouring peoples, and driven forward by historical destiny, constrained to claim the integrality of its geographical territory, of which Rome is the essential part. In this desire, this need of Rome, there is no trace of imperialistic ambition, nor the least attempt to exploit the incalculable power of the Papacy for the benefit of a monarch. On the contrary, Italy, alas, well knows that by this inevitable gesture she will alienate for a long period, perhaps for ever, the great moral and political force that the Holy See represents throughout the world. She is aware that she will stir up at the very heart of her finally awakened nationality an element of discussion and anxiety from which she will have to suffer for many years. Lastly, there is not in the inevitable action of this people the least hatred of the Church. On the contrary, Italy is for the greatest part, almost entirely, profoundly Catholic, never ceasing to venerate the power of the Pope, admire the historical rôle of the Papacy, and render gratitude for the greatness and glory she owes to so many pontifical reigns.

And, indeed, if it were possible for Italy to find a definite solution which would allow the Pope to remain as supremely

independent as when he reigned over the States of the Church, there is no effort, no sacrifice, that she would not be ready to make in order to attain such a result.

But, alas, there has, from the beginning of the conflict, been no possibility of this, which is what makes this question so vital.

It is impossible, first of all, for the Pope to renounce his seat in Rome. This is an essential point, about which there should be no illusion. Since 1870, and even before, many plans and dreams, and much nonsense, have been put forward from Germany, France, and especially America. How many enthusiastic priests and imaginative laymen have devised plans of new kingdoms to which the Holy See might be transported! A return to Avignon has been spoken of; the principality of Lichtenstein has been proposed; the Balearic Islands, Corfu, Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily. In the time of Leo XIII, I knew American seminarists who talked of transplanting the States of the Pope to Louisiana or the borders of the Salt Lake; others, more conciliatory, advised buying with dollars the Canaries or the Azores.

The Holy See, however, cannot leave Rome, and, if it did so, it would only be as the result of constraint and force; an eventuality that one may suppose impossible for a very long time, and doubtless for ever. The Church is, by its very definition, *catholic, apostolic, and Roman.* It was in Rome that the fisherman Simon laid that eternal stone upon which Jesus ordered him to build the

Church ; it was in Rome that the blood of Peter himself, and Paul and so many others consecrated the foundation of the divine institution ; it is in Rome, therefore, that the Church must maintain her hearth until the consummation of the centuries. That is an article of faith—and of fact—which no historian has any longer the right to dispute.

On the other hand, if it is impossible for the Pope to renounce his seat in Rome, it is equally impossible, under the present order, for him to renounce his claims to some temporal power. That is the crucial point of the " Roman Question." It is also the most delicate. On the strength of my long stay in this city I shall not hesitate to treat this subject with complete impartiality. It is before everything important to determine whether the temporal power of the Pope had been from its beginnings legitimate or usurped ; whether it was necessary for the functioning of the Papacy, or whether it was merely a vain luxury or even contrary to the mission of the Holy See.

On this subject there have been enough mutually contradictory theses to fill large libraries, and it may be said that the controversy has lasted, without any conclusion being arrived at, since the time of Charlemagne, and even before. Let us touch only on the essential points.

The theory that the temporal power of the Pope has been a mistake, and even an evil, for the Church was supported especially by the great voice of Dante ; and the three famous lines of the *Inferno* have been repeated

millions of times, not only by Italian voices, but by others almost entirely ignorant of Italian :

> " Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre
> Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
> Che da te prese il primo ricco patre."[1]

Dante, of course, and not without reason, traced back the beginning of temporal power, not to Charlemagne, but to Constantine himself, who, by recognising the Catholic clergy and allowing them an official existence in Rome, became the true founder of their political power. But this idea expressed so strongly by Dante is not his own. He was only its greatest exponent, as was the case also with the imperialistic and Ghibeline ideas that he pressed, as we have seen, to their final conclusion : blasphemy and heresy. All these ideas were alive in the medieval world, and especially in that tumultuous thirteenth century in which the poet of the *Divina Commedia* was born. They were especially established and urged during the reign of Frederick II, in the violent polemics which set at loggerheads one of the greatest defenders of the Holy See, Innocent IV, and the most audacious champion of the rights of the Church, Pierre des Vignes, Frederick's minister.

This Pierre des Vignes, whom his apologists have represented as one of the greatest statesmen in the history of the world, does indeed appear to have had an extraordinary power over men and ideas, and gives a certain amplitude to the struggle of the Empire against the Church in the time of Frederick II, its most striking and crucial period.

[1] " Ah, Constantine ! to how much ill gave birth, not thy conversion, but that dower which the first rich Father took from thee ! "

Now, in all the writings of Pierre des Vignes as in all the published letters of Frederick himself, obviously dictated by his great minister, the *motif* is reiterated that the temporal power of the popes is, both for the Church and for religion, a source of infinite evil, and that the Church and the Holy See must be brought back to the evangelical poverty of the first apostles. Neither Frederick II nor Pierre des Vignes omit to recall the harangues of the great agitator, Arnaud de Brescia, who begged the popes to renounce temporal jurisdiction and exhorted them to confine themselves to the " White staff of the apostolic pilgrims."

Frederick II, in his letter to the Sovereign, composed beyond any doubt by Pierre des Vignes, concludes thus :

" It is a work of charity on your part to remove from these men of the Church these prejudicial possessions which are the cause of their damnation ; all we princes should fervently undertake this good work in order that the clergy may renounce all that is superfluous, and, contenting themselves with modest possessions, consecrate themselves wholly to the glory of the Lord."

This quotation shows the peculiar spirit in which the temporal power of the popes was attacked some years before Dante, and in what analagous terms to his own. Moreover, all who lived in the imperial atmosphere repeated in verse and prose the invectives of Frederick and his minister. The troubadour Figueira, an exile from Occitania received at the court of the Hauenstauffen, wrote in one of his most eloquent " *sirventes* " :

" Oh, traitress Rome, cupidity is thy ruin, and thou shearest too closely the fleece of thy sheep !

". . . Rome, I am content to think that thou wilt soon be chastised if the emperor, the dispenser of justice, successfully follows his fortune and accomplishes what he is to accomplish !

" Rome, I tell thee in truth : we shall see thy violence brought to ruin ; and it is my prayer, oh Rome, that our true Saviour may soon allow me to contemplate the spectacle of thy overthrow ! "

I have already said (Chap. III.) what was to be thought of the sentiments expressed by the troubadours of Occitania with regard to the popes and the kings of France. The anger and invective of Guillaume Figueira find their explanation, and in some degree their excuse, in the passion of the time and in the sufferings undergone by the Occitanian exiles. But all that goes to show what heralding flickers went to light the blaze which inspires the *Divina Commedia*. In another poet of the period, Walter von der Vogelweide, we find invective entirely similar in sense to the famous tercet of Dante quoted above. He says to the priests :

" Remember how of old you journeyed along the roads, begging in the name of God.

" It is for that alone that Constantine has offered you worldly goods.

" But if he had foreseen the consequences, so fatal to you, of his gift, he would have thought twice before acting thus, and would have spared you his error.

" But then you were still virtuous, and not vain, not proud."

We see that the outspoken Ghibeline poet had brought nothing new to the struggle against the Holy See except his genius and the immortality of form with which he has endowed certain ideas. This is the reason that they have so long survived. But they remain merely another repetition of the passionate arguments reiterated throughout the Middle Ages by the partisans of the Emperor in the

long struggle between the Empire and the Church. The very origin of these arguments suffices to reveal their weakness, in spite of the generous impulse of Dante and his irreproachable disinterestedness. The passion that shook Dante had none of the egoistic and ambitious motives that prompted the invectives of Frederick II and his minister, Pierre des Vignes, or even of the poets who lived at the imperial Court.

Dante, indeed, was only moved by his strange but sincere belief in the providential benefits of imperial domination. Extraordinary as this imperialism of the great poet appears to us to-day, as we have exposed it in a preceding chapter, it is incontestable that such a state of mind voiced the collective impulse of a chosen intellectual coterie living in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A book like *De Monarchia* and verse like the *Divina Commedia* are not the fruits of the caprice and paradox of an individual author. Dante is the least individualistic and most capricious of poets; he is essentially the representative of a period, and to some degree "*collective.*" There was then in Italy during the Middle Ages, and particularly during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a kind of "Caesarian mysticism" which possessed the finest souls of the time; and what finer soul than that of Dante? This mysticism, of which we find the expression in the treatise *De Monarchia*, consisted in a belief that the Roman Empire was not destroyed, that it could not be destroyed, and that it represented for Italy the ideal form of her prosperity and for the whole world peace. The splendid glory of Virgil, the devoted poet of this imperialist ideal,

assumed at that time the proportion of a veritable golden legend, and we know that the Middle Ages had raised the poet of the Aeneid to the glory of a prophet and herald. The choice made by Dante of this guide for his divine journey was in no way the whim of a scholar, but the poetical image of the admiration of all his contemporaries. For most of the Ghibelines the imperial eagle, symbol of dominating power and peace imposed upon the rest of the world, was a mystic sign almost as sacred as the Cross, and, moreover, inseparable from the Cross. Caesar, the indestructible temporal power, protecting Peter, the undisputed spiritual power—such was the ideal, not only of Dante, but of the majority of the men of his time.

There has appeared quite recently a work on this subject by M. Luigi Valli, entitled *Aquila e la Croce*,[1] which I recommend to all who are interested in this great question, the greatest of all history. They will read there with what good faith, what ardour, and even what piety the greatest minds of a whole epoch have allowed themselves to be carried away by such an illusion.

For it was an illusion, and also an error. That is the truth we must not hesitate to repeat in this chapter, though we have already dealt with it elsewhere. It is the very essence of this work. Dante was mistaken, and with a blindness that we understand to-day, for it is explained and justified by the passions and impulses of his great, tumultuous century. But that he was mistaken is no longer open to question. The whole history of the

[1] *The Eagle and the Cross.*

emperors in their relations with the Papacy down to Charles V and Napoleon proves beyond all possible doubt how decidedly the popes were right through the centuries in resisting the imperial ambition, their most formidable enemy.

Dante is right, however, when he traces back the origin of the temporal power to Constantine rather than Charlemagne. In this he justifies the necessity for this temporal power. The day when an Emperor of Rome was converted to Christianity and divined its future power, and the day this Emperor, by his Edict of Milan, recognised the possession and administration of the Churches of Rome and their dependencies by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, he established in favour of the Church the first foundation of a terrestrial power. An institution like the Church, indeed, which has grown so rapidly through three centuries of persecution and unconcealed hostility, and which was by its very origin destined to become universal, could not pitch its camp in the open air like some Asiatic sect, or in a public garden like a Greek school of philosophy. It had to have terrestrial domains that it might treat on terms of equality with the most formidable powers of the earth. The whole history of the Church, from Constantine down to Pepin the Short; the struggles to which the Bishop of Rome had to submit, first against the Emperors themselves, then against the barbarian chiefs who were quarrelling over Italy, all show decisively that Constantine's gift was still inadequate, and that to put the apostolic Holy See beyond the reach of the blows that continually threatened her it

was necessary to grant the Pope possession of the territory surrounding the city of Rome and instal him as a King among the other Kings. Charlemagne, then, did no more than develop, in obedience to inevitable necessity, the first gift of Constantine which, six hundred years before, had been equally inevitable and necessary.

We have already demonstrated this truth when speaking of Charlemagne and Pope Adrian; it is unnecessary to return to it here, and to insist on what is to our mind the impossibility of conceiving any other historical solution.

All the dreamings of mystical monks and idealistic tribunes about "the white staff of the apostolic popes" and the primitive and idyllic times when "the apostles cast their nets to take only souls" (St. Bernard) are very seductive at first sight, and appear just to our superficial sentimentality; but they are swept away like clouds before the historical brutalities that were to make necessary the Church militant that she might live free, and even merely live, on foundations more solid than the consent of the faithful and the protection of the great ones of this world.

When, glancing through the history of Europe from Charlemagne to the present day, one sees what were in the Middle Ages, and even in modern times, the kings and masters of the world, one wonders with terror what would have become of the Church of Peter had she not possessed this little corner of the earth (always disputed but always recaptured), to which she could attach her unshakable throne, and from the heart of which she could resist the most formidable

powers of the west without accepting or submitting to the protection of a temporal master. And when she had to submit to this protection, as at the time of the exile in Avignon or under the bloody reign of Charles V (the true instigator of the sack of Rome) we have seen to what a degree of pitiful servitude the Church had fallen, and what saints and heroes were required to set her once more upon her feet.

Let us also remember the feudal ruffians who, throughout the Middle Ages, strove to impose their will and caprice upon the sovereign of Rome, whose sovereignty these bloody and unscrupulous barons disputed at every opportunity. What would they have done if the Pope had been merely a poor pilgrim dressed in fustian, his white staff in his hand, wandering from church to church and forced to accept whatever asylum was offered him, at the price of concessions, by such beasts of the forests as Cencius, the Colonnas, the Orsinis, and other brigands of the Roman plains? A Rome without a Pope-King would have meant one of two things: either the Emperor reigning all-powerful, or the feudal blackguards squabbling for the kingdom. In either case, what would have become of the ship of St. Peter? Either she would have been put at the service of the victors or have risked being dashed to pieces.

The temporal power of the Popes was therefore an absolute necessity for the independence of the Church and her free development through the fluctuations of history. Without this temporal power the spiritual power would

always have remained precarious, in a perpetual state of subjection or revolt, and its sovereign exercise would have been materially impossible. That is the real fact, stripped of all passion and all dreaming, of which to-day, after the experience of more than a thousand years, no impartial mind can harbour the slightest doubt. That this temporal power has given rise to evils and disorders is possible and even irrefutable. But these contingent evils, which have never influenced the continuity of the doctrine, were better for the Church than extinction or submission. One or two thousand years of material tribulation are nothing to an imponderable power possessing the secret of eternity. The important thing for the Church was that she should live and grow. But she could only live and grow so long as she owed submission to no one; and for this it was necessary that no terrestrial power should reign over her in the city chosen by her founder, not by the caprice of a traveller or apostle, but by divine predestination superior to his own choice.

That is the crux of the "Roman Question." The whole thing turns, to-day, on ascertaining whether the indisputable reasons which for so many centuries had legitimised the temporal power of the Popes have now ceased to exist. We shall then see whether a solution is possible or impossible and what, in consequence, will be the future of the Papacy.

### 2.—*The Historical Case for Italy*

And, now that we have presented the historical case for the Papacy, let us see how the "Roman Question"

originated politically; how it has developed, no longer merely in the brains of poets like Dante or isolated thinkers like Machiavelli, but in the passions and needs of the peoples themselves, renewed or transformed by the tides of history. We shall also see how France, more than any other European nation, came to be involved directly, now on one side now on the other, in this inevitable conflict between the Papacy and Italy; or, to speak more precisely, between Italy and the temporal power of the Popes.

It may be said that the first public indications of a " Roman Question " arose with the ideas of the French Revolution. From that day partisans and adversaries of the Pope-King have fought in France almost as passionately as in Italy.

The French Revolution, indeed, showed itself from the beginning hostile to the temporal power of the Pope. This attitude was seized upon with that fiery crudity, that often fierce and clumsy violence, that declamatory emphasis, which the first revolutionaries in the intoxication of their emancipatory ideas showed both at home and abroad.

Even before the fall of the Monarchy and the proclamation of the Republic the struggle had begun. The vote of the Constituent Assembly relative to the civil constitution of the clergy roused the anger of the Court of Rome, and Cardinal de Bernis, French ambassador since 1769, resigned on 16th March, 1791, and was not replaced.

On 4th May, 1791, an effigy of Pope Pius VI was burned at the Palais-Royal in Paris. This outrage was not directed against the spiritual sovereign of Catholicism, but specifically against the temporal sovereign of the Papal States. Since, as a result of this insult, the Court of the Tuileries could give no satisfactory reply to the representations of Duguain, the apostolic nuncio, the latter in turn withdrew, leaving his post in Paris vacant as Cardinal de Bernis had done in Rome.

Thus diplomatic relations between Rome and Paris were completely broken off. The proclamation of the Republic in September, 1792, rendered the hostility still more acute. Two young artists, students of the Academy of France, the sculptor Chinard and the painter Ratier, were imprisoned by order of the Pontifical Government for having displayed the tricolour cockade in the streets of Rome.

This action by the Roman police provoked tremendous indignation in France. It loosed all the revolutionary anger against Rome, and if one wants a glimpse of the character and ideas of the period it is sufficient to read, not even the republican press, but merely two official documents of which I quote the most important sentences. Both emanated from the Provisional Executive Council, which constituted the Government of that time, and was composed of the conventionalists Roland, Monge, Clavière, Lebrun, Pache, and Garat.

One of these documents consists of instructions, dated 25th October, 1792, and addressed to Admiral Truquet,

commanding the Toulon squadron. These are its most important passages:

"The executive council desires to remind Rear-Admiral Truquet of the various grievances that the French Republic has against the Pope of Rome and the part played by this monstrous power in the coalition of the tyrants against liberty, without enumerating the base intrigues and imbecile briefs with which it has sought to ignite in your breast civil and religious warfare. The council charges Rear-Admiral Truquet to chastise in passing the Pope and the Sacred College, and to bring them back to the feeling of respect due to the French Republic."

The other document, dated 21st November, 1792, is a letter addressed by this same Government to the Pope with regard to the imprisonment of the two artists mentioned above. This letter is very curious, the manner in which it is addressed being in itself sufficient to indicate its spirit—*the Provisional Executive Council to the Pope-Prince of Rome.* Here are its principal passages:

". . . Free Frenchmen, children of the arts, whose sojourn in Rome maintain and develop the tastes and talents which are the city's pride, are suffering by your order unjust persecution. Dragged from their work in an arbitrary manner, confined in a strict prison when the only crime with which they can be charged is that of having made known their respect for the rights of humanity, their love for a fatherland which acknowledges them, they are marked down as the victims to be sacrificed by combined despotism and superstition.

"Doubtless if it were permissible ever to purchase at the price of innocence the success of a good cause it would be necessary to let this outrage pass. The troubled reign of the Inquisition ended on the day when it once more abused its strength, and *the successor of St. Peter will cease to be a prince on the day he condones it.* Reason has everywhere raised her powerful voice. She has reawakened in the heart of oppressed man the consciousness of his duty and of his strength. She has broken the sceptre of tyranny, the talisman of royalty. Liberty has become the rallying-point of the universe, and the sovereigns tottering on their

thrones must henceforth show her favour if they are to avoid a violent fall.

"Pontiff of the Roman Church, still prince of a state ready to slip from your hand, the centuries of ignorance are past . . . etc., etc. . . ."

Beneath this pompous, inflated, and rather ridiculous phraseology, so characteristic of the tendencies of the period, one can already discover the same principles, good or bad, which were to feed the "Roman Question": the right of the peoples to govern themselves in the light of what appears to them their superior interest, and consequently the suppression of the old powers, judged anachronistic and no longer in keeping with the needs of the new or renewed nations.

This conflict of ideas, still vague and declamatory among the people of 1792, was to become much more precise five years later with the entry into Italy of the armies of Bonaparte, the first Austrian defeat, the enthusiasm of the Italian patriots for the hero of Arcole and Rivoli, and the continually increasing anxieties of the Pontifical Government.

Here, for example, is a document from the Directory to Bonaparte, published a few years ago by Frederic Masson. The tone is already less emphatic, and one feels a more reasoned policy. It was the day after the peace of Tolentino in 1797:

"The Foreign Minister assures General Bonaparte that the Directory rely on his usual wisdom for the attitude to be adopted towards Rome. It requests that he will use all his efforts to establish there, without shock or convulsion, the representative Republic, and that he will encourage the desire for his mediation to establish the Government

and to prevent the disorder which might accompany revolution in the States of the Pope."

To prevent shock, convulsion, and disorder in such a case is easier to order than to realise. The murder of General Duphot by the Pope's soldiers in December, 1797, precipitated this threatening and prepared revolution.

On 15th June, 1798, General Berthier, after penetrating the Pontifical States via Ancona, mounted the Capitol and in the name of the French Republic recognised the independence of the Roman Republic.

It certainly seems at first sight as though these agitations are in every way similar to those of Crescentius, Arnaud de Brescia and Rienzi, and that the " Roman Question," strictly speaking, has nothing to do with these revolutionary activities any more than with those of the Middle Ages. And yet careful consideration of the facts and ideas of the time shows the situation to be very different. When in the Middle Ages, some Roman baron or tribune of the people wanted to establish in the Eternal City another power than that of the Pope, he did so in obedience either to immediate and personal interests, or at the call of a glorious past he wished to restore. Crescentius and Rienzi wanted to re-establish in Rome the Republic of Scipio and the Gracchi, just as Barbarossa and Frederick II desired to restore the Empire of Caesar and Marcus Aurelius. It was merely the glamour of the past that inspired their acts, and the desire to revive epochs which had been glorious. In 1792, on the other hand, and especially in 1797, a new idea, good or bad, had penetrated the souls of men and

nations and involved every possible transformation of the future. Men and nations were masters of their destiny, and the consent of the nation was indispensable to the formation or revolution of human societies. Whether we will or no, whether we approve or disapprove, such an idea changes the face of history and provokes infinite consequences. That is why the creation of the Roman Republic in 1798 is of quite other importance in the annals of the Papacy than the occasional manifestations of ephemeral tribunes stirred solely by memories of ancient Rome. General Berthier's proclamation really contained the germ of the " Roman Question."

Even though, later, Bonaparte, then Napoleon, despotically canalised the impetuous torrent of the Revolution, and tried to turn to his own profit and that of his dynasty the struggle engaged against the Papacy, by incorporating the States of the Church with the French Empire and crowning his own son King of Rome, it is none the less apparent that the Republicans of the First Republic were perfectly sincere and true to their principles in the sometimes ridiculous, sometimes violent struggle against the temporal power of the Popes. Of course, they were meddling with what did not concern them. But they meddled with that intolerable and heroic frenzy which marked all their attempts to change the face of the world. In removing Rome from the Papacy they had no other end in view than that of encouraging the establishment of an independent and popular government in the city of the Gracchi, as they had done in Naples, by the creation of the Parthenopean Republic, and at Milan

by the establishment of the Cisalpine Republic. As we have seen, the First Empire tried to give to this movement a personal and Caesarian form until the day when the fall of the Emperor and the treaties of 1815 restored to Europe the monarchies of the old régime, destroying the edifice of Italian unity which was already begun and re-establishing with all its old prerogatives the temporal power of the Popes. But the storm that had passed over Europe, and particularly over France and Italy, remained a vivid memory in the depths of many souls.

In the course of the quarter of a century that passed between the Revolution and the Restoration, too many people and too many ideas had been shaken for the past to be definitely re-established. Italy especially had glimpsed the possibility of national unity and out of the dream with which she was henceforward obsessed was born the " Roman Question." Henceforward nothing can destroy it. All these new ideas suppressed by the agents of the various restorations take refuge in the hidden shelter of secret societies.

Carbonarism was to develop along parallel lines in France and Italy. Now what was the carbonarism of 1820 and the following years if not the deep fermentation of revolutionary ideas, with all their consequences, in these two Latin nations who felt themselves oppressed by a reaction to which they had given no consent ; that is to say, in France the plan to overthrow the old dynasty and in Italy to form a compact united and independent nationality. This latter conception inevitably included the idea of

suppressing the temporal power of the Popes. This idea was gradually taking shape in the active brains of leaders who personified it, spread it, and paved the way for its realisation. These were an agitator, Mazzini; a soldier, Garibaldi; a diplomat and statesman, Cavour; and lastly the head of the royal house of Savoy, first Charles Albert, then Victor Emmanuel. Thus, then, the "Roman Question" was not only not solved by the treaties of 1815, but, on the contrary, became more precise and vivid in the minds of those who were to enter upon the struggle against the very results of these treaties. And as the Restoration of the old régimes in 1792 could not be of long duration, it was certain that the day when one of the two Latin countries would rise in a fresh revolution, the other would immediately follow suit. In this way the Roman Republic of 1848–1849, founded by Garibaldi, Mazzini, and other champions of the *Risorgimento*, was the logical result of the First Republic of 1798, proclaimed by a general of the Revolution.

We have seen in the case of the second Napoleon what had been the importance of this Roman Revolution of 1848–1849, and what part had been played in it by the Government of France. It would be superfluous to return to it here. But we must note that this time the event is clearly and purely Italian (in spite of the ridiculous insinuation of Oudinot and Louis Bonaparte that the Roman revolutionaries were a band of foreigners). This was the first time that the "Roman Question" was brought up in a concrete form by authentic Romans and Italians, and

not by foreign revolutionaries, as in 1798. But it is incontestable that there is a solid link between these two historical acts. Henceforward, however, the " Roman Question " remained exclusively Italian ; by which I mean that only Italians were to take part in its solution in the direction dear to them, and, moreover, imposed upon them by the very force of their history—the realisation of their national unity. And not only were they not aided by neighbouring peoples, but, as we have seen in dealing with the Second Republic and the Second Empire, the Emperor of the French and the Emperor of Austria actually attempted to oppose the suppression of the temporal power of the Pope which was the logical and inevitable outcome of Italy's movement towards her unity.

The phases of this great struggle are too well known for it to be necessary to relate them here. It is indeed certain that after the defeat of Piedmont at Novaro in 1849, and the fall of the Roman Republic in the same year, Italy was forced at all costs to resume the struggle, and realise her final unity under the penalty of falling for ever into political servitude and annihilation. It is a law of fate, and must be accepted once for all if the force of the " Roman Question " is to be understood. From the day this idea of becoming a united nation—like, for instance, France and Spain, two other Latin countries—first penetrated the minds and hearts of the Italians, two absolute necessities were imposed upon them, if necessary in spite of themselves, and in any case in spite of all the others, namely, the expulsion beyond their frontiers of the foreigners who

were still wielding usurped power—i.e. Austria—and the suppression of the temporal power.

These two "executions," since one must employ this cruel word, were absolutely necessary, and there is no doubt that neither alone would have sufficed to satisfy the natural craving for unity. An Italy deprived of any part of her territory would not have been, indeed, a united Italy ; but if that territory was Rome herself; the most central, most important, and above all, the most glorious city of the whole peninsula—Rome, in fact, and the name is sufficient —it is obvious that Italy would not be entire, and that in this special case would remain a headless trunk. That is why the capture of Rome became just as much a necessity to the men of the *Risorgimento*, and even more so, than the fusion of the kingdom of Naples into the Kingdom of Italy and the conquest of Venice and Milan. But there was in the pursuit of these parallel and so closely interconnected solutions a moral difference so profound that the peninsula was deeply troubled by it, and was to remain so for a long time. For if, on the one hand, the expulsion of the foreigner beyond the Alps and the rescue of the provinces from the rule of Austria–Hungary formed a group of ideas capable of rousing the unanimous enthusiasm of Italians, the retaking of Rome, on the other, was quite another matter. This historical necessity rent Italian souls asunder.

Not only was Italy deeply Catholic, but the Pope was an Italian sovereign, and the history of the Papacy was bound up with thousands of memories in the history of the peninsula. What anxiety, what anguish, was caused

in the hearts of many Italians by the announcement that the new régime, which was to found Italian unity, would have to touch the thousand-year-old power, and perhaps even the person of the Sovereign Pontiff! For the ideas which were then formed as to the solution of the "Roman Question," not only abroad but also in Italy, were full of confusion, dramatic suppositions, and infernal visions. It was imagined in all sincerity in many Christian circles that the partisans of Italian unity were diabolical monsters, the messengers of Satan and Antichrist, lusting to suppress the Papacy, the Church, and religion itself, and hurl the Vicar of Christ into a lake of fire and brimstone. To obtain a clear idea of the state of mind which at that time obsessed many panic-stricken brains, it is enough to take up the pages, otherwise admirable in their eloquence and lyricism, which our great Veuillot has consecrated to the "Roman Question" in his *Parfums de Rome*. His invective against the "*Subalpin*"; the fulminating anathemas which he hurls so magnificently against the Italian priest, the partisan of his country's unity; his cursing of "the pirates and pedants," proved to what an extent, between 1860 and 1870, the question had assumed apocalyptic proportions even in the sanest minds. For Veuillot, apart from his genius, maintains an outstanding sincerity, and it is in full sincerity that, his heart full of emotion, he writes this simple phrase, all the more significant for its simplicity:

"All the enemies through whose hands the Church has passed stand united before her; they act in unity; they are full of hope; nowhere does any help appear."

It is easy to-day, when sixty years have passed and the horizon has cleared, to smile at this deep excitement of our fathers. But let us go back in thought to the atmosphere of those stormy years, when one of the most disturbing enigmas of history brooded among the clouds of the unknown, and ask ourselves whether *we* should have had the strength to preserve unmoved serenity.

There were then, before 1870, in Italy, as in France and throughout Europe, many Catholics as distracted as the great Veuillot, and this was not the least of the difficulties that the labourers of the *Risorgimento* had to surmount. They themselves were excellent Catholics, sincerely desirous not to diminish in any way the moral influence of the Church and the prestige of the Papacy. For though there were few anti-clerical or free-thinking enemies of the Church among the adversaries of the temporal power, the majority of those who were working most effectively for the establishment of Italian unity were Conservative by tradition and Catholic by upbringing, full of respect for the Pontiff and some even very zealous Christians. These tools of Satan, these agents of Antichrist, these fierce revolutionaries, were men like Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, Massimo d'Azeglio, Baron Ricasoli, Marquis Visconti-Venosta, etc., etc. These good men shuddered as much as Veuillot at the idea that the moral influence of the Papacy might be diminished and their religion subjected to further ordeals. But historical necessity was stronger than their own will, and unless they were to renounce their plans to make Italy they were constrained

to carry through the whole work, though it involved the suppression of the temporal power of the Pope in Rome. Everything that passed in Italy and France during the reigns of Victor Emmanuel and Napoleon III led relentlessly towards this inevitable conclusion. The war in Lombardy, the victories of Palestro, Solferino, and Magenta, Garibaldi's expedition in Sicily, the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, the retaking of Venetia, the shifting of the capital to Florence, etc., etc.; each of these was a move in the encircling of Rome, whose possession had become the aim of all this national epic—*risorgimento*. It was useless for Napoleon III, conqueror of Solferino and liberator of Lombardy, to think he possessed enough prestige and strength to preserve Rome when he had given back Milan to Italy. He only delayed destiny by a few years, a few moments even, and himself risked the fate of his country. He lost his throne and his show of empire at the same time as he compromised the Papacy. The battles of Aspromonte, Mentana, Castelfidardo, and Monterotondo are stages of this march which nothing in the world could evade. Two weeks after the Emperor of the French, conquered at Sedan, had to renounce the throne and leave France, the Italian army, almost without a struggle and as a result of the force of circumstances, entered Rome and the temporal power was forced to capitulate.

The cataclysms foreseen by Veuillot and so many foreign, and even Italian Catholics did not come about. On the contrary, the men of the *Risorgimento* and the Ministers of the Italian Government, troubled by their own victory,

tried to modify as much as possible the disturbance it might cause, bowed morally before the greatness and spiritual sovereignty of the Pope, and were only anxious to accumulate and establish the greatest possible number of guarantees to assure to the Vicar of Christ security, liberty, and prestige in the Eternal City.

Thus ended the first act of the great historical drama which had lasted almost a century, and in which a whole people, in spite of itself as it were, was thrown by its very destiny into a struggle with a temporal sovereign whom it respected and a Pontiff whom it loved and venerated. A sentiment stronger than the will of a handful of men inspired and directed everything.

3.—*The Taking of Rome and the Law of Guarantees.*

We are henceforward in the presence of a *fait accompli*, and after considering, as a whole, the historical relationship of the Papacy and Italy, what answer must we give to the two questions already asked: Was Italy right? Was the Papacy right? To both these questions the only answer is, yes.

1. Yes, Italy, a very ancient people going back more than a thousand years before Christianity, having in the nineteenth century once regained consciousness of her real nationality and fundamental unity, had a right to try to reunite under the control of a single Government all the regions forming that living entity which is called a nation, and consequently could not renounce Rome, that essential city, the very centre of her territory and history.

2. Yes, the Papacy whose historical rôle has been visible and uninterrupted for nineteen centuries, and which for eleven centuries has exercised power in Rome and its neighbouring territory for the greater good of the governed population, and with the unanimous consent of all European nations; the Papacy to which Rome was assigned by its founder, and which could never separate from it, had the right to claim this domain which it considered indispensable to its dependants and to the free exercise of its spiritual power.

The conflict of these two rights, both equally irrefutable, constitutes, properly speaking, the *Roman Question*.

It is precisely because they are both irrefutable that this question has been so burning and so ceaselessly renewed. For if one of the two rights invoked by the two parties could have been denied, diminished, or even disputed, sooner or later one of the two theories would have ousted the other.

Observe, for example, how in a few years the conflict between the Bourbons of Naples, the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, and the vice-royalties of Austria in Italy were finally eliminated. Who would think of speaking of a Neapolitan question, a Florentine question, or a Milan question? This is because, in Italy's claims with regard to these various regions, the right of the former possessors was so precarious, and that of the Italian people so indisputable, that it only required a slight popular activity and, if need be, a few battles, for these territorial questions to be settled for ever; whereas now, in the year of grace 1923, we do not yet see the solution of the "Roman Question,"

and it is precisely this continued insolubility which constitutes for us the interest, amplitude and poetry of this great historical problem.

Let us return to that 20th September, 1870, when the Italian army, under the orders of General Raffaele Cadona had just entered Rome through the Porta Pia breach. We know why Italy was compelled to accomplish this act of force. But we also know for what reasons the Holy See had, first to resist and then protest.

Could the Pope have resigned, and adapted himself to the *fait accompli* as the King of the two Sicilies and the Grand Duke of Tuscany had done? Could he, after acknowledging his defeat, depart in peace to await a happier destiny, and live in Paris or London the decorative and vain life of exiled kings? The very idea of such resignation and adaptability in the case of a sovereign Pontiff is in itself so alarming, and at the same time so ridiculous, that it is enough to mention it to reveal all its absurdity. We are in the presence of a power which in form is unlike any other terrestrial power. All human power is mobile and transitory. Monarchies, principalities, empires, republics, cities and federations all pass, have passed, or will pass, and history is nothing else than the story of successive greatness and decadence in every form of organised society. Here, on the other hand, is an organisation which is in essence indestructible and unshakable. Even those who had just entered Rome knew this, and proclaimed it publicly. There was no question, therefore, of driving the successor of Peter, Gregory, Leo,

Innocent, and Sixtus out of Rome, as the successor of the Bourbons had been driven out of Naples. This was quite another matter, as any schoolboy can at once understand. Moreover, they were so far from wishing to drive the Pope from Rome that on the very first day he was declared intangible and inviolable within the sacred palaces of the Vatican.

It was even added that if he wished to appear in the Eternal City or his former States, he would be accorded the honours due to a sovereign; the whole army and all the police of the new occupants would be put at the service of his security and prestige.

This was a peculiar type of "vanquished man" before whom the "conquerors" were ready to kneel. Such an encounter is not only exceptional, but unique in the history of the world. This is why such an event cannot be judged in the same terms as any other human conflict. Those who say that after the entry of the Italian soldiers into Rome the Pope should have yielded to the inevitable, and renounced his temporal power without more ado, are talking the language of current history, which in this case has no meaning. The temporal power of the Pope, as I have already shown several times in this work, does not rest on conquest or chance like all the others, having no aim beyond itself. It is not an end, but a means; it is not a possession, but a condition. It is the very condition of spiritual power, and this spiritual power, in the eyes of the Pope and in the eyes of the whole Church, is the only essential and indestructible thing that exists on earth. If you are not

a Catholic you have a right to dispute temporal power and spiritual power, and one through the other, as you please, but if you are a Catholic you have not the right to refuse to recognise a truth which is proved and confirmed by the whole history of Europe for the last two thousand years. The condition of spiritual power is the absolute independence of the Pope, and the condition of this independence is the sovereign possession of a terrestrial domain, allowing the Pope complete freedom from the jurisdiction and supervision of any other human power on earth.

If Pius IX had accepted the *fait accompli*, would he have been independent, and consequently free to exercise that spiritual and universal power transmitted to him by his two hundred predecessors? No, he would have ceased to be independent in Rome the moment another régime and another royalty were installed on the very site where yesterday he was king. He would have been the subject, the protégé, or the guest of the new régime and the new Government; but, being no longer chief, he would no longer have been free. It was inevitable. What could the Pope, or any other pope, have decided in such circumstances? Simply as Pius IX effectively ordered—the breaking off of the struggle, to spare his people civil discord and the shedding of fraternal blood. But beyond that he could only utter a protest on the subject of his rights, which he declared indefinable, and then shut himself as a voluntary prisoner within the palaces of the Vatican. That is precisely what Pius IX did. I defy anyone to find a better solution, or even any other solution at all. Leaving

Rome was not to be thought of. The Pope would only leave by force, and no one thought of forcing him. Quite the contrary. On the other hand, could the Italian Government leave Rome, the essential capital of the new nation? Equally no. Hence the "Roman Question" was established in September, 1870, in the position in which we find it to-day, fifty-three years later. Who will solve it?

Honest men attempted this from the very morrow of the taking of Rome. Nothing more clearly shows the perfect good faith, the deference, and even the ingenuousness of the Pope's adversaries—involuntary adversaries—than the number of sincere and touching efforts they made to make the new situation acceptable to the Sovereign Pontiff.

Of these efforts the most celebrated and most remarkable was the drawing up of that famous *Law of Guarantees*, which is still in force, at least on the left bank of the Tiber, and which is always mentioned when the "Roman Question" is discussed. I publish the text in the appendix of this book, so that the reader may, if he likes, study it in detail.

Whole libraries have been amassed about this *Law of Guarantees*. As this is a synthetical and not an analytical work, I shall not go into the history of the innumerable discussions to which this law has given rise between the partisans and adversaries of the papal temporal power. I remember, however, a time when anyone who raised a doubt as to the indisputable perfection of this sacrosanct law would immediately have been put down by Liberals of all ages and shades as an enemy of the new Italy, a false or

sectarian spirit desirous of handing back to the Pope the keys of Rome and possession of the Pontifical States. It was by antonomasia, the "juridical masterpiece." This law in itself sufficed to solve the "Roman Question." What am I saying? It had finally solved it, and this question was to remain for Italians nothing but a vague memory, like that of the duchies of Parma or Placenza or of the principality of Benevento. True, it was still discussed abroad, but that was either out of ignorance or ill-will against Italy. The *Law of Guarantees* had settled the matter once and for all. Even the most independent and critically-minded of Italians would have avoided like sacrilege a mere shake of the head while reading it. A foreigner, therefore, should at least preserve silence.

But now in Rome herself, and amongst the most advanced parties, a new generation has arisen, which has at last dared to examine closely and more objectively the famous "juridical masterpiece," and has very disrespectfully reduced it to juster proportions. The young men who have entered life and politics in Italy during the last ten years have indeed brought to their method of treating religious matters, and particularly the affairs of the Vatican, a more impartial mind, free from the doctrinaire prejudice and that kind of juridical obsession which characterised their Liberal ancestors.

And so to-day one can speak frankly of this famous *Law of Guarantees*, and point out its weaknesses. This is of all the greater importance since the Law is one of the essential pivots of the "Roman Question."

About two years ago, in the months of March and June, a very interesting polemic on the relations of the Papacy and Italy appeared in the Italian Press in connection with the visit to Rome of M. Jonnart. This we shall return to later on. It re-opened the question of the Law.

Several Liberal and Democratic journals like the *Messaggero* and the *Tempo*, and even Nationalist papers like the *Idea Nazionale*, ventured to approach this intangible idol, and the *Tempo* notably published the following sentence without raising any cry of horror from the rest of the Liberal and Democratic Press:

"The chief thought in the minds of those who conceived and formulated the *Law of Guarantees* was that of conceding to the Pontificate nothing that might represent a real or apparent diminution of the sovereign rights of the Italian State over the whole of the national territory. It is realised to-day that such a thought may have prevented the authors of the law from discovering and appreciating the motives which constrained the Holy See not to accept a law which placed it in *a state of thinly-veiled subordination.*"

Some days later the *Vita Italiana*, an influential Italian review with a very wide circulation and of pronounced Nationalist and even Fascist tendency, whose Italian patriotism is consequently indisputable, published the following lines:

"Recognition, in fact, of the sovereignty of the Pope is non-existent in the *Law of Guarantees*, and the palace of the Vatican is not even recognised as the absolute property of the Pope. Article 3 of the law in its first paragraph establishes that the Italian Government accords to the Sovereign Pontiff within the territory of the kingdom the same honours as are accorded to other foreign sovereigns. Article 5 provides that the Pope should *continue to enjoy the Vatican*, which in

reality remains in the possession of the Italian State. Finally, the articles which follow and which establish the inviolability of the apostolic palaces implicitly deny the extra-territoriality of the apostolic Holy See."

Let us also quote this passage from a brochure written by another Italian publicist, Andrea Chiari, who in his criticism of the famous law goes even further than the editor of the *Tempo* or the *Vita Italiana*. It is true that Andrea Chiari is regarded as a writer of the Catholic party. It is, however, certain that a few years ago he would not have attempted to express himself in such terms :

" It is useless to appeal to the *Law of Guarantees* when this law has not only never been accepted, but is, moreover, devoid of any juridical value to-day. Many Italian jurisconsults say : ' But why did not the Pope accept a law which is a very monument of wisdom and a veritable postulate of modern Italian jurisprudence ? '

" The law has not been accepted because it has never been notified ; and it would never have been accepted because the most cursory examination shows us at once its substantial incoherence, and that it in no way corresponds to what the legislation had proposed to formulate.

" The *Law of Guarantees* has not been accepted because it was a law which gave no confidence, no substantial or formal guarantee. This law, which has been declared a monument of juridical wisdom, has established no political stability. Indeed, had the Pope accepted, he would have become an ordinary citizen of the Kingdom of Italy, subject to all the laws of the State, and not even certain of his position in Italy, since the *Law of Guarantees*, being an internal law, is subject to modification and even annulment at any time that it might please the legislative authority to do so."

Let us close our quotations with this. I could find many others, but these three will suffice. They demonstrate what a change has taken place in Italian minds after half a century with regard to one of the fundamental points upon which the men of the preceding generations relied,

or thought they could rely, to solve the "Roman Question" and accuse Pius IX of intransigeance and obstinacy. Now, without even going as far as Andrea Chiari, who refuses any juridical value to this *Law of Guarantees*, let us examine individually some of its principle articles and we shall see that it is indeed unacceptable. What is the apparent aim of this law? Its very title indicates it—to give to the Pope, despoiled of his temporal domain, another guarantee of independence and absolute sovereignty equivalent to his lost domain, and replacing for future centuries the disastrous gifts of Constantine and Charlemagne.

Now I ask anyone capable of reading and reasoning: can this *Law of Guarantees* be considered a complete compensation for the loss of the temporal power? Is the Pope, under the aegis of this law, as free, as absolutely independent in the eyes of the universe, as when he was King of Rome?

His person is sacred and inviolable, it is true, but whence comes this inviolability? From the fact that he is master and sovereign? No, but from the fact that he is *protected* and *defended* by another master and sovereign. And this, is, from the outset, the sign that this law is, from beginning to end, a law of protection and defence in favour of an august guest living within the kingdom.

"*Article* 1.—The person of the Sovereign Pontiff is sacred and inviolable."

The second article corroborates this first impression.

"*Article* 2.—Any attempt against the person of the Sovereign Pontiff or incitement to such attempt is punishable by the penalties established for attempt against the person of the King or incitement thereto."

Again the guest who is told : " You will be treated in the same way as the master of the house." And if anyone fails in this, it is the master of the house himself who undertakes to punish the insolent offenders :

" Such crimes will be offences against public law, and will be dealt with by the Court of Assizes."

So that if the Pope were to go out into the street he would do so under the visible protection of the whole Italian police and even the Italian army; and if, in spite of this strict and zealous surveillance, the impossible should happen, and he should be insulted or attacked by some ruffian, drunkard, or sectarian, all that he would have to do would be to return silently home, with no other consolation than that of waiting for the verdict of justice, excellent without doubt but absolutely foreign to his person and the organisation of which he is the head. Does not this make it quite clear that he lives in Rome under a special form of hospitality; deeply respectful and devoted it is true, but in no way compatible with any degree of sovereignty ?

It is true that the next article of the law says :

" The Italian Government renders to the Sovereign Pontiff within the territory of the kingdom sovereign honours, and extends to him the pre-eminence of honour recognised by Catholic Sovereigns."

It may be noted that such sovereign honours will be equally rendered under any circumstances to foreign kings and emperors coming to Rome to visit the King of Italy, and even to democratic presidents of republics, like M. Emile Loubet. There is in this article nothing that modifies this character of " royal hospitality " which the *Law of*

*Guarantees* maintains throughout. On the contrary, this new article merely accentuates it. And this accentuation even becomes a little ponderous in Article 5, which expressly states :

"The Sovereign Pontiff shall *continue to enjoy the apostolic palaces of the Vatican and the Lateran*, with all the edifices, gardens, and land appertaining thereto, etc."

Thus, then, the guest is not even the owner of the estates in which they are kind enough to house him. He is simply entitled to the enjoyment of them on the express condition that he shall make no alterations in them and put them to no wrong use :

"The said palaces, villas, and annexes, as also the museums, library, and art and archaeological collections situated therein are inalienable."

The case has even been foreseen of the august guest taking it into his head to sell the property entrusted to him. I am well aware that this is what is called a *clause de style* ; but was it hoped by legal niceties of this kind to replace ten centuries of pontifical sovereignty ? I cannot believe that men of genius like Cavour, the real inspirer of this law, or of high intelligence and delicate political sense like Visconti Venosta, Quintino Sella, Giovanni Lanza, and all the ministers who signed it, can have had any illusions on this point, or thought that they had really solved the "Roman Question" by articles hardly better, as far as "guarantees" are concerned, than the impossible imperial decree of the 17th March, 1809, which the Pope rejected with disdain.

No, I cannot believe it. They cannot have cherished such an illusion; but it is true that there was no other course open to them, and, above all, they could not at the time have found any better solution. If we consider the *Law of Guarantees* in this light it will be at once seen that, without being altogether an incomparable masterpiece, it is an excellent measure of practical and temporary policy while awaiting a better.

Let us return to the day after the entry into Rome in September, 1870, which is, it must not be forgotten, one of the most moving dates in the history of the world. A newly-born nationality—or a nationality born anew—still frail, without external support, without any stabilised internal wealth, without prestige even, for it was as yet scarcely formed and was disputed from every side; a nationality confident in its future, but whose future appeared uncertain to others; a nationality in short, which was new to Europe, succeeded in accomplishing, by the force of circumstances, one of the boldest and most sensational moral acts in the history of the world—an act that had been attempted several times, and without success, by the most formidable Caesars of the Middle Ages; an act which had been accomplished three times in the previous century, and each time annulled by subsequent events, in 1798, 1809, and 1849; an act, lastly, which at the very moment of its realisation was condemned and cursed as sacrilege almost unanimously by the Catholics inhabiting the rest of the world, and even by people who were not Catholics, but who were touched by the dramatic and sentimental side of the

event. In a word, the Italians had just entered Rome, armed, through a breach in the walls of the city, and had suppressed at a single blow the temporal power of the Papacy.

We can easily imagine and, indeed, we know from the contemporary account, how this act rang through the Christian world from Ireland to Australia, from Chili to the Sunda Islands. It should be further noted that the men who had accomplished and directed these events were neither ambitious, unscrupulous Caesars, hungry only for glory and domination, nor impassioned sectarian enemies of the Church. They were honest and brave men, whom destiny had called to found the unity of their reborn nation, and good Catholics who respected the Papacy. But their very love for their Italian fatherland forced them, in spite of themselves as it were, to contest and suppress the legitimacy of the temporal power of the Pope, whom they venerated. And now they were faced with the *fait accompli*. What could they do? Show themselves the enemies of the Pope, and treat him as a fallen foe? This was quite contrary to their thoughts. They had never been his real enemies, and they knew well that he was not conquered. Show themselves his friends, and immediately seek reconciliation with him, in the way that so many kings and nations have come together immediately after the struggle? They were much too acute politicians and deep psychologists not to feel that this was as yet impossible, and would probably remain so for a long time. So, failing an immediate reconciliation, which no intelligent man could

seriously entertain, they had at least to impress upon the Pope the fact that he had nothing to fear from them and upon the whole world, which regarded them with hostility or distrust, their determination to respect the Church and the Sovereign Pontiff and indemnify them as far as possible for the inevitable loss of the Pontifical States.

Such were the feelings which gave birth to the *Law of Guarantees.* It has been criticised as a one-sided law; and, indeed, it could be nothing else. The Italian Government knew perfectly well that the Pope could not accept it; but it also knew that this law had to be formulated and promulgated. There were obligations that the Italian Government was obliged to meet, that it was sincerely determined to meet; those obligations, which assured to the Pope his security, prestige, and the functioning of his high office, had to be made public in the interests, first of Italy, then of the Pope, and finally of the whole world.

That the Pope would reject it could not have been doubted by the excellent jurists who had drafted it. They were well aware that in order to respresent a real and intangible guarantee in the eyes of the Pope and of the international world this law would first have to be made international, which would have necessarily involved control by other Catholic nations. But is it admissible that a nation like Italy, hardly yet born but jealous of its independence and justly aspiring to become one of the first States of Europe, could accept in any way the control of foreign nations within the kingdom? It was unthinkable, so opposed was it to ordinary common sense. But if this

was unthinkable, it was equally unthinkable that the Pope, on his side, should accept as a final guarantee of his international position a domestic law formulating the relationship of the Italian Government with the Head of the Church enthroned in Rome.

For it *was* a domestic law and nothing more. And as such it was very well drafted, in the sense that in it Italy herself fixed the obligations which she was to fulfil and has fulfilled. It was therefore not a solution but a makeshift. It was the least mischievous and most practical means that could be thought of to settle the immediate difficulties while waiting for better days; to allow time, the *galant'nomo*, to do its work, until in the future a solution should gradually be reached. This is to what the excellence of the *Law of Guarantees* finally reduces itself.

How many other celebrated laws have attained results less satisfactory and less durable? After all, it has now lasted more than half a century, and has even survived the years of the war! But it is inconceivable that anyone should have expected that in 1871 Pope Pius IX would welcome this well-meant police bye-law as a guarantee of his independence and spiritual sovereignty. As the *Vita Italiana* says: " Recognition, in fact, of the sovereignty of the Pope is non-existent in the *Law of Guarantees*"; and the *Tempo* confessed that " the sovereign Pontiff would find himself in a state of thinly-veiled subordination."

Without suggesting, as does Andrea Chiari, that this law gave to the Pope " no guarantee, either substantial or formal," we may well agree with this writer that, " being

a domestic law, it is subject to any modification and to annulment at any time that might please the legislative authority."

Pius IX, then, on the morning after the taking of Rome, could not yield to the *fait accompli* as the king of any other conquered province would have done. He was not only an Italian prelate who had become, as Pope, the temporal sovereign of a bit of Italy. He was the Sovereign Pontiff; which means that he was invested with a universal power whose jurisdiction stretched over the whole civilised world. However friendly he might be to Italy at heart, Italian history could only be for him an incident, like the history of France, or Spain, or Germany, or Chili. The one eternal thing that he had to defend was the See of Rome, which Peter had founded for ever. Now this See could not leave the site of Peter's tomb, where it must remain independent of all human power. That, for the Pope, was the single historical truth before which he could never hesitate. For reasons doubtless very just from the human point of view, but strange and accidental from the divine, he was to suffer the loss of what constituted the very essence of his independence. Yes, but what was he offered in exchange? Nothing! And so he shut himself up in the palaces of the Vatican, contenting himself with uttering a pacific but irrevocable protest. Where in all this lies the obstinacy of Pius IX? Where his *intransigeance*? It may be stated without fear of error that any other pope would in his place have acted exactly as he did.

### 4.—*The Present Position of the Question*

On the 20th September, 1870, Rome became the capital of Italy. *The Law of Guarantees* was promulgated on 13th May, 1871. The following day, in an encyclical dated 15th May, 1871, Pope Pius IX repudiated without discussion these guarantees offered by the Italian Government.

Has the situation since changed? No; for on 23rd December, 1922, in the encyclical *Ubi arcano*, Pope Pius XI expressed himself thus:

" The divine origin and nature of Our power, as well as the sacred right of the community of the faithful scattered throughout the entire world, require that this sacred power should be independent of all human authority, should not be subject to human laws (*even though these laws claim to protect the liberty of the Roman Pontiff by assistance or guarantees*). They require, in fact, that their rights and power should be completely independent, and that this should be made manifest.

" . . . We, therefore, the heir and depository of the thought as of the responsibilities of Our predecessors, endowed, like them, with the sole competent authority in this very grave matter, hereby renew the protestations raised by Our predecessors for the defence of the rights and dignity of the apostolic See. We do so, not to satisfy a vain ambition of terrestrial power, the least preoccupation with which would make Us blush, but to fulfil Our sacrosanct charge, and in the thought that We have to die and render to the Divine Judge a strict account of Our acts. . . . "

The immediate predecessor of Pius XI, Pope Benedict XV, had never expressed himself otherwise on any occasion when his solemn declarations led him to touch upon the " Roman Question." Let us recall the terms of his *Pacem* encyclical dated 23rd May, 1920, after authorising the official visits of Catholic sovereigns to Rome:

"But We must solemnly declare that the condescension of Our attitude, advised, it seems to Us, and even demanded by the excessive gravity of the present times, should never be interpreted as a tacit abdication by the Holy See of its sacred rights, as if it had at last accepted the abnormal situation which is at present forced upon it.

"On the contrary, we seize this opportunity to reiterate, on Our own behalf and for the same motives, the protestations raised on several occasions by Our predecessors, actuated as they were, not by human reasons, but by a sacred duty."

Thus have expressed themselves the last two Popes whom public opinion regards as being the best disposed towards a spirit of conciliation with regard to Italy.

Pius X, who was also regarded by the crowd as of Italian cast of mind, and was believed to have renounced what was called the "intransigeance" of his two predecessors, never lost an opportunity of claiming the "imprescriptible rights of the Holy See." No one has forgotten, especially in France, the strong protest he voiced in his letter to the Powers on the occasion of President Loubet's visit to Rome. He referred to the King of Italy as "he who unjustly detains." It is true that by a widespread popular prejudice the responsibility for these words was at that time attributed to Cardinal Merry del Val, and Pope Pius X was supposed to hold aloof from all politics. It is known to-day, on the contrary, that he controlled everything himself with an energy and force of will that only death could conquer. And it was he who, in a *motu proprio* of the 18th December, 1903 relative to Christian popular education, issued the following order:

"It is the duty of all Catholic journalists to keep alive in the people the feeling and conviction that the Holy See has found itself in an

intolerable position since the invasion of its civil principality; no opportunity should ever be lost of recalling and driving home the solemn protestations that the Holy See never ceases to issue, and the lofty reasons which inspire them."

These protestations, formulated at the beginning of his reign, Pope Sarto renewed eight years later on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition in Rome, and repeated again a few months before his death in April, 1914, in an address to the Milan pilgrims.

As far as Leo XIII and Pius IX are concerned, it is unnecessary to recall their claims on the subject of the rights of the Holy See. Public opinion, which always swings from one extreme to the other, even supposed for a long time that they were the mortal enemies of Italy, and that they desired the integral reconstitution of the old estates of the Church.

The truth is that no Pope was ever the enemy of Italy any more than of France or any other Catholic country. But without wasting time over discussions that are now relegated to the past and henceforward belong to the domain of narrative history, let us confine ourselves to making clear, in the light of the few quotations already given, that since the 20th September, 1870, or, if it be preferred, since the 13th May, 1871, the day of the promulgation of the *Law of Guarantees*, nothing has happened to modify the relations between the Holy See and the Italian State. To-day, as then, the Pope does not leave the Vatican; to-day, as then, the *Law of Guarantees* remains one-sided; to-day, as then, the Pope never ceases to protest against the blow aimed at his "imprescriptible rights";

to-day, as then, the "Roman Question" is therefore unsolved. That is the clear and indisputable fact.

Must we make up our minds to regard it as insoluble? I think not, and I will presently say why. First, however, it is well to note what was and is the real state of public opinion in Italy on the subject of the "Roman Question"; for, after all, it is a question which primarily affects Italy and her dependants, not ourselves.

For my own part, I have been able to note, in France and elsewhere, how seriously public opinion can go astray in all that concerns the affairs of Rome. Those who live beyond the Alps, indeed, are prone to imagine that this famous "Roman Question" constantly preoccupies the minds of all the Italian people, or at least a great proportion of them —those who study political problems and are interested in international relations. And in France, particularly, many of my friends, Catholics and non-believers, suppose that the relations of the Vatican and Italy—they always say the Vatican and the Quirinal—obsess most Italian patriots as, of old, the Alsace-Lorraine question obsessed us. Among other examples I remember that my friend, Charles Maurras, in an article in *L'Action française*, in which he speaks very sympathetically of Italy, describes it as "rent in twain by the 'Roman Question,'" as no doubt it once was by the quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibelines. Now, if a man of genius as judicious and acute as Maurras can be so seriously misled as a result of the distance which divides him from the country of which he writes, it is easy to cojnecture how far astray are those who are ready to talk at

random on any topic at all. Many, for example, are convinced that there still exist in Rome two rival factions, separated by insuperable barriers: the " Blacks," and the " Whites," who never meet except on neutral ground, and even then with great caution. Quite recently a worthy French General, one of the heroes of the Great War and also a deputy in our Parliament, spent several days in the Eternal City, where he discovered the Villa Medici. On his return to Paris, seized with commendable zeal for our French Academy, he declared that this secular art institution, were it furnished with means to receive Roman society worthily, might become a most propitious neutral ground for the reunion of the rival factions. Even from an illustrious soldier such ingenuousness would be incomprehensible if the prejudice did not still persist in France and the other countries of the three continents that Rome groans under the incubus of the " Roman Question," and that the two irreconcilable parties live there in separation. This is one of the mistakes concerning Italy which amuse Italians at our expense. It is a very long time since these two factions, the Blacks and the Whites, ceased to be anything but a memory. They are never mentioned in Rome except by illustrious foreigners passing through. The idea of making these two opposing factions meet secretly in the drawing-rooms of M. Denys Puech appeared in this case to spring much more from Parisian imagination than from international diplomacy. Our good general will doubtless be pleased to learn thatfor a long time the Blacks and the Whites have been meeting daily in drawing-rooms, clubs, the halls of great hotels, and even at home. Must we remind him,

for example, that one of the members of the house of Colonna is an Assessor to the Pontifical Throne, whilst another is a Senator of the Realm, and frequents the King's palace? Perhaps there existed a few years ago among the "Blacks" in Rome a few prehistoric fossils who were still inimical to the Italian State. To-day they exist no longer. Their sons did their duty bravely on the battlefield during the war, when the unity of their country was consummated. Many young men of noble family who served in the "Guard of the Nobility" proudly wear in their buttonholes, and even on their pontifical soldiers' uniforms, the ribbons of the decorations they deservedly won fighting for the new Italy. This alone allows me to dispense with further proofs. The Roman aristocracy has long forgotten these divisions of fifty years ago. When Zola, to make a thorough study of the Eternal City with the object of writing his *Rome*, came to spend a fortnight at the Minerva Hotel, it occurred to him to consult one of the most typical representatives of the Roman Patriarchy, and it was my friend, Ugo Ojetti, who had the pleasure of taking the author of the *Rougon-Macquart* to see Prince O——. Ojetti tells the story effectively in the *Corriere Della Sera*. Zola, who had solemnly prepared a series of questions on the problems of the hour, duly asked his host the following question:

"Can you tell me what the Roman aristocracy think of the 'Roman Question'?"

The brilliant nobleman, who, moreover, was infinitely more Parisian than Zola, promptly replied:

"The 'Roman Question,' my dear master? I can assure you that the Roman aristocracy doesn't care a hang about it" (*s'en fiche complètement*).

I believe that Prince O—— used a rather different expression, but in any case poor Zola was quite crestfallen; not by the expression, to which he was accustomed, but by the surprising fact. What! this "burning" question, of which, according to his sociologist's mind, every Italian dreamed of day and night! And here were the aristocracy themselves not caring a hang! Well, what about the people? Alas, they cared much less; which Zola, very much against his will, found himself forced to admit even during the few afternoons he spent in Rome.

It may, indeed, be taken for certain that the vast majority of the Italian people take no interest whatever in the "Roman Question." Out of forty millions of inhabitants let us say four thousand at most are interested in it in normal times. For all the rest it is solved, or is a matter of indifference. It is never thought of except at times of sensation, as, for example, the death of a Pope or the coronation of his successor.

What is the reason for this illusion, or rather this indifference? . . . First of all the great wisdom shown during the last fifty years by the Vatican on the one hand and the Italian Government on the other, thanks to which noisy conflicts have been avoided or modified. The result is that, through a mental apathy natural to all peoples, the Italian nation, no longer suffering from this state of things, regards itself as free from it. For the moment, what the general

public can still see is that the Italian Government is leaving the Vatican very much in peace, and that the Vatican on its side carries on its work peaceably, and never seeks quarrel with the Italian Government. If it protests, it confines itself to inoffensive and purely verbal claims, either in a pontifical discourse or in the columns of the *Osservatore Romano*. As a rule the general public does not even read in its daily papers the rubric in which these passages are reproduced. This is what gives rise, and with some reason, to the illusion of the apologists of the *Law of Guarantees* that there no longer is a "Roman Question," and that their famous law has sufficed to solve it.

But is it necessary to prove that this is only an illusion? Because the majority of a nation never think of one of the most interesting problems of its future, can one say that that problem does not exist? I mentioned just now the Alsace-Lorraine question in France before the recent war. It was, indeed, much more of an obsession, and infinitely more serious for us than the "Roman Question" is for the Italians. And yet, frankly, how many Frenchmen gave it a thought? How many peasants, workmen, and middle-class citizens in the provinces of central, western, or southern France, or even elsewhere, spent whole years without considering for a single instant this historical necessity, and only gave it passing attention when reading in the newspapers the vibrant speeches of some orator or poet who could not forget?

Indeed, to keep a question alive, and to make it obtrude itself from time to time on the distracted attention of the

indifferent, it is enough that some should not forget. It is not the majority who lead us on to future history; it is always a very small minority. Just as in France a small group composed of Paul Déroulède and his friends kept the thought of the lost provinces alive in face of general forgetfulness, so in Italy a thousand men or so are sufficient to prevent the "Roman Question" from being forgotten. Were there only one, the Pope, it would maintain its full intensity.

The few phrases of Pius XI, Benedict XV, and Pius X, which I have quoted above, do not call for much comment. I will mention, in addition, these words of Francesco Crispi:

"The greatest man in the Italian State will be the man who solves the 'Roman Question.' . . ."

And again:

"The only remedy that will put an end to the 'Roman Question' is time."

Thus there has always existed, and always will exist, a chosen circle of Italian minds who do not regard the present relations between the Holy See and Italy as final. It is, indeed, impossible to relate in detail all the attempts that have been made during the last half-century by the two parties; or rather the two ideas, for one cannot really describe as a "party" either those who are fighting for the rights of the Church or those who stand for the rights of Italy. The subject rises far above everyday passions and ordinary political discussions. Some of these attempts have been insane, some touching, some bold, some ingenuous; some seem to bring the end nearer, others drive it into the

clouds. Proposals have been put forward by real statesmen, and inanities have been thrown out by well-intentioned ecclesiastics whom the Vatican has had to call to order. One edifying prelate from the north of Italy lost his purple over it; several priests lost their soutane; none has ever lost his spirit. There is an opportunity for a patient archivist to compile a very interesting book simply by collecting the hundreds and hundreds of plans that have been put forward since 1870 for the solution of this historical problem. And how many tiresome or amusing people have passed their lives haunted by some splendid plan! Who has not met in Rome "specialists" on the "Roman Question?" For my part, I have had at my house some of all ages, all sexes, and all parties. They brought me brochures, printed or in manuscript—especially in manuscript—and confided them to me, whispering:

"Read them very attentively and you will see that the 'Question' is solved."

Dear good dreamers! I have never had the courage to contradict them, as I have always been so moved by their touching zeal. One must have lived long in Italy, and have tried to understand and love this country as I have always tried to do, in order to feel all the anguish—yes, anguish!—caused in certain ardent and mystical minds by the thought of the relations which exist, have existed, and will continue to exist between the Holy See and the nation to which they, Catholics and patriots, doubly sincere and doubly idealistic, belong. It is therefore quite natural repeatedly to encounter imaginative

brains and devoted hearts always ready to seek, and find a way out of a misunderstanding which fills them with distress.

And it must be admitted that such zeal, even though at times exaggerated, is neither ridiculous nor futile; for every now and again the discussion of the " Roman Question," and plans for its solution, cease to remain the privilege of " specialists " and for days, and months even, fill the columns of the public Press, raising discussion and controversy and thus demonstrating in the most irrefutable manner that this great problem still stirs men who take an interest in contemporary, and, even more in future politics.

Of all the discussions that have been universally sustained in the great Italian newspapers I will quote only the last ; for one reason because it is the last, and therefore resumes and annuls those that preceded it ; further, because the very fact that this question was so thoroughly discussed in 1921 constitutes the best proof that it was not solved in 1871 ; finally, and especially, because this time the polemics assumed an amplitude and boldness which have resulted in the terms of the problem being so strangely distorted that for several days minds not generally susceptible to illusions were convinced that a definite solution was on the point of being discovered.

This is what happened in the Italian Press during the months of May and June, 1921, the last year of the pontificate of Benedict XV. M. Jonnart had just been appointed French Ambassador to the Holy See. This was a fact

of considerable importance, and several papers, notably the *Messaggero*, declared that it "constituted beyond all doubt the greatest event that had occurred under the pontificate of Benedict XV"; the *Messaggero* commented upon it in the following terms on the 29th May:

"All the powers, great and small—except the United States—have a direct representative at the Vatican. England herself has not recalled her Envoy Extraordinary, approved for the extraordinary period of the world war. The policy of 'representation at the Holy See' has thus prevailed in all countries, regardless of the respective tendencies of their domestic politics. Now one country alone is absent whose interests to be defended, maintained, and integrated are not inferior to those of the others, and for whom the policy followed by the Curial is of great importance. This country is Italy.

"Italy, indeed, having forgotten to commemorate on the 13th of this month the fiftieth anniversary of the *Law of Guarantees*, follows the method of "the oblique diplomacy," and does not see what grave consequences may result for her; and that simply because she is afraid to reopen a problem which she regards as already closed; a problem which, for fifty years, it has been impossible to examine, because it appeared inextricably bound up with an irreducible anti-national idea. Now many obvious signs lead us to believe that this problem has been changed; and changed in such a sense that it can be discussed to-day without fear of compromising the prestige of the Italian State. We believe that Italy has emerged from the war and victory mature enough to face this problem."

This article, of which we give the essential part, created a tremendous stir in Rome and throughout Italy. It was, in a word, an invitation to reopen the "Roman Question," and in an entirely new direction. It is fitting that we should insist here on the sensational nature of such an appeal appearing in the *Messaggero*. This newspaper, the most popular in Rome, has always been the organ of the Democratic parties, who have long been adversaries

of the Vatican. All the anti-clerical, and sometimes even anti-religious movements that have occurred in Rome during the new régime have been more or less supported, sometimes even provoked, by the columns of the *Messaggero*, whose circulation and influence among the people are immense. It has always, on principle, accused the Holy See of hidden enmity towards Italy, and even in this article in quite a new tone which we reproduce here, it alludes to " an irreducible anti-national idea." It had always affirmed that all connection between the Church and the lay states should be avoided, and, as far as France was concerned, it was definitely opposed to her resuming relations with the Holy See. Further, the whole Democratic Radical party of Italy, of which the *Messaggero* was one of the most authoritative guides, grew indignant whenever France suggested sending an Ambassador to the Vatican. This was, indeed, for a considerable time one of the chief arguments brought forward by Frenchmen who opposed the appointment of such an Ambassador. " Do not let us affront our Italian friends," they said, " by treating with the enemy." The enemy was the Pope!

It is even probable that, if it had been decided in France a few years earlier to resume relations with the Holy See, the democratic Italian Press, and specially the *Messaggero*, would have opened a formidable campaign against such a step.

Now we see that in May, 1921, just the opposite occurred. Not only did the *Messaggero* not censure France for having appointed an Ambassador to the Holy See, but it congratulated her on the political spirit she had shown in so doing,

and urged Italy to modify her relations with the Vatican. It even called upon her to face the " Roman Question."

This article in a Roman newspaper in itself indicated that public opinion had undergone a great revolution. If it had remained an isolated case it might have been taken to be the personal fancy of some director or editor, but the sensation it created was enormous, and the whole Italian Press followed along the same lines.

Between 29th May and 20th June the greatest journals of Rome took up the discussion, and for four weeks the argument was very acute. The Nationalist *Idea Nazionale* corroborated the views of the Democratic *Messaggero*; the Catholic *Corriere d'Italia* replied; then the Liberal and Nationalist *Giornale d'Italia* threw itself into the struggle, followed by the *Tempo*, a Giolittian organ which struck a particularly interesting note. Then came the *Tribuna*, the *Epoca*, the *Italie*, the *Azione*, the Republican *Giornale del Popolo*, the Socialist *Avanti*, the semi-Socialist *Paese*; reviews like the *Nuova Antologia*, *Echi e Commenti*, the *Vita Italiana*, publications like the *Agenzia Nazionale della Stampa*, the *Agenzia di Roma*. The sensation quickly spread beyond the walls of Rome and nearly all the provincial journals took it up; notably the *Corriere della Sera*, the *Secolo*, the *Sera*, the *Commento* of Milan, the *Corriere Mercantile* of Genoa, the *Mattino* of Naples, the *Nazione*, and the *Unita Cattolica* of Florence, the *Rests del Carlino* of Bologna, the *Corriere delle Puglia* of Bari, and many others down to the grave and patient *Osservatore*

*Romano*, which struck the final note and brought an atmosphere of tranquillity into this unexpected agitation.

It would take too long, and would be out of place here to reproduce all this discussion, which, however, was very significant. It appeared, moreover, to be of such natural interest that the able director of the Press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amedeo Giannini, at once collected in an official brochure the principal articles in chronological order, and added three speeches on the subject made in the Chamber: one by Benito Mussolini on behalf of the Fascists, the other by M. Tovini on behalf of the Popular Party, and the third by Alfredo Rocco, on behalf of the Italian Nationalism. The sensation was so great that its echoes even reached Parliament.

We will, however, give a digest of this historic discussion. The *Messaggero*, as we have seen, was outspoken as to the necessity for Italy to open relations with the Vatican and so solve the " Roman Question." This necessity or duty was accepted by all, or almost all the Press. This was the new fact. The few who still try to oppose this new spirit take refuge behind the old arguments that we already know, such as the intangibility of the *Law of Guarantees* and the practical uselessness of a reconciliation with the Vatican. These arguments, however, are put out of court by the greater part of the Liberal Press, and we have already said that the *Tempo* itself, the organ of Giolitti's friends, does not hesitate to make a frontal attack on the rather antiquated *Law of Guarantees*, which it declares unacceptable. But this same *Tempo* goes further still. In its issue of the

2nd June, 1922, it states the question of temporal power, and speaks openly of the *space necessary to the supreme authority of Catholicism for the exercise of its powers*. It adds, doubtless to modify the audacity of such a novelty: "*Were this space no more than a centimetre square.*" But this picturesque and witty restriction does not alter the fact that the shaft was thrown and struck the heart of public opinion. The *Tempo*, moreover, develops the idea thus:

"In order that this long-standing and troublesome 'Roman Question' should reach a suitable solution it is necessary for Italian policy to convince itself of this: to hand over to the complete possession of the pontificate the territorial zone which is necessary to it, so that the Holy See may stand, in the eyes of the whole believing universe, perfectly and serenely protected from any interference or predominance on the part of any particular nationality, will not constitute any diminution of the rights of the State."

I leave to the imagination the comments to which this famous "square centimetre" gave rise. These few words express the very essence of the "Roman Question," and this time it does not come any longer from the Holy See or one of its organs, but from an organ of the Italian political world.

If any Roman paper had ventured upon such phrases ten years earlier it would have raised a tremendous scandal; if a correspondent of a foreign newspaper—your servant, for example—had written only a quarter of what the most Liberal and Democratic newspapers of Rome were spreading in thousands of copies during the summer of 1921, there can be no doubt that he would have been politely requested to recross the Alps. Which goes to prove that all ideas

have their season, and that in history there is no better secret than knowing how to wait. Therein lies the great strength of the Church.

No scandal, indeed, was raised by the suggestion of the *Tempo*, which was discussed with the most everyday calm, as if it were a question of some ordinary law. Three days later, on 5th June, the Democratic *Messaggero* wrote :

" The Holy See, without abandoning its protestations and reservations, now no longer puts forward claims which are incompatible with our unity. The question, therefore, has, after many trials, been lifted out of the blind alley in which it had become involved half a century ago. And if Italy, after the late war, has finally taken her place among the great powers, the Papacy, on its part, has not only not fallen into decadence, but has strikingly strengthened its moral prestige and spiritual authority. That is sufficient to remove any doubt as to whether Italy is ripe to discuss in a serene atmosphere the problem of her relations with the Papacy ; and this she must do.

" The question now is to ascertain whether Italian public feeling realises the maturity of this problem, and has made up its mind to face it.

" No Democratic champion of the lay state need be alarmed that such a problem should be debated. The relations between Italy and the Papacy are based on the law of 13th May, 1871. This law is fundamental to the Italian State, but the Vatican has never recognised it, and still less accepted it. It is therefore evident that any intention of an *entente* between Italy and the Vatican should admit first of all that it is necessary to proceed to a revision of the pontifical prerogatives, substituting for this law a bilateral act of which the Pontiff should be one of the contracting parties.

" The *Law of Guarantees* does not recognise as a *right* the sovereignty of the Pontiff, inasmuch as no sovereignty can exist without territory. This law, indeed, establishes simply, in Article 9, that the Italian Government renders to the Sovereign Pontiff within the kingdom sovereign honours.

" Now, the territory necessary to realise the idea of such sovereignty might be within the palace of the Vatican itself, of which to-day, according

to the law of 1871, the Pope possesses only the use. The day when the Kingdom of Italy allows the Pope absolute enjoyment of the apostolic palaces, and when these are considered as extra-national territory, the extra-territoriality of these places would be admitted by law, and the sovereignty of the Pope would cease to be a fiction and become a reality."

It will be seen that the "square centimetre" of the *Tempo* has in three days grown to be the space covered by the palaces and gardens of the Vatican. After that we can pass over the other arguments and comments of the Liberal Press and confine ourselves to noting the manner in which such new developments were received by the Catholic Press, and particularly by the organ of the Vatican.

The Catholic Press naturally assumed an attitude of considerable reserve, for in such matters it is the Holy See alone that can pronounce the final word. They did not, however, hide their surprise and pleasure at seeing the former adversaries of the Papacy taking a step towards them. The *Unita Cattolica* of Florence said:

"This campaign has a moral value, and is a sign of subconscious orientation which should not be depreciated or neglected."

In the *Corriere d'Italia* of Rome, which has the largest circulation of all the Catholic Press, Mgr. Enrico Pucci, an erudite and very shrewd prelate, who often reflects the opinion of the Pontifical Court, is pleased to observe that the *Law of Guarantees* is beginning to be examined and discussed, for it is at last realised that it was "a veritable act of sovereignty on the part of the State over the Pontiff." He says:

"There is in this law a fundamental equivocation: that of having believed that by this means provision was being made for external necessities, those of the Church, by providing for internal necessities,

those of the State. There are therefore two questions: the *Roman*, which concerns the *recognised* independence and sovereignty of the Pope; the *Italian*, which concerns the direct relations between Italy and the Vatican. With regard to the first question, the Pope can never, from the very nature of his office, renounce the right and duty of demanding *something which in the eyes of the Catholic world replaces efficaciously the lost guarantee.*"

I believe I am not far wrong in saying that this opinion of Mgr. Pucci is a faithful echo of what is being thought in the apostolic palaces. But one can even more certainly interpret in this sense the article in the *Osservatore Romano*, written by Comte della Torre, director of the official organ of the Holy See, who, as is known, has played such a great part in the Italian-Catholic movement of late years. This article, which appeared on 19th June, 1921, is a true historical document, inasmuch as it gives the exact opinion of the Vatican, and establishes the real position of the question as it stands to-day. The article is entitled: "We take cognizance," and, indeed, the director of the *Osservatore Romano* takes note of the declarations and advances made by the Italian Liberal Press, and shows at the same time what are the last concessions which the Holy See is prepared to make. Count della Torre states first of all that in the discussions in the Italian Press with regard to the question pending between Italy and the Vatican two points seem clearly fixed:

1. *The "Roman Question" exists.*
2. It is to the interest of Italy to solve it.

And he adds:

"We take cognizance of this because the Holy See and the Catholics have always been of the same mind, even when, on the other side, the

problem was considered immutably fixed in an irreducible conception of the sovereignty of the State; which sovereignty, on the contrary, would be neither threatened nor compromised in fact by any solution reciprocally accepted by common agreement.

"We have never thought or affirmed anything to the contrary, in spite of the fact that for many years the death and burial of the 'Roman Question' has been so persistently proclaimed that there could be no further connection with the interests and fortunes of new Italy."

Speaking of the *Law of Guarantees*, the director of the *Osservatore Romano* states that the discussion on this point has at last led the Liberal and Democratic Press to recognise that this law is unacceptable and out of date. He continues:

"We take cognizance of it. For fifty years the Church has affirmed this at the risk of rousing the anger of suspicious aesthetes who admire the 'juridical masterpiece.' For fifty years we have been demonstrating the practical futility and substantial absurdity of a one-sided act which is not accepted by the interested party—a guarantee that like any other constitutional law, can be changed by the will of the majority, and consequently at the caprice of any dominant party; an act which in the name of a particular State denies to a sovereign and universal power effective sovereignty, and accords to him instead a mere show of honours; an act which assures and promises the Holy See, as far as possible, so much liberty that it is not even allowed to say whether it accepts it, which in itself would constitute a diminution of the indisputable sovereignty of the State over the Church! To-day at last our adversaries are arriving at the same conclusion as ourselves; we have a right to rejoice."

Finally, Count della Torre touches with remarkable clearness and candour the vital problem of the "Roman Question."

Not only, then, does the "Roman Question" exist; not only is it in the national interest that it should be solved; not only is the *Law of Guarantees* out of date, but the territorial solution is possible and necessary.

" And finally we take cognizance of that also. For, without entering into the merits of the different suggestions as to the extent of territory involved, let us confine ourselves to the point on which all our colleagues are agreed : namely, that sovereignty, *de-jure*, can to-day only exist in its full sense when based on territory. That has always been in the mind of the Holy See and of Catholics, even when their adversaries refused to accept it as an elementary juridical axiom, but regarded it as a sectarian prejudice.

" Liberty and independence, in the full meaning of the words, required by the nature of things, and essential to a spiritual power, can only become concrete through the medium of sovereignty. In the present position of the law of nations such sovereignty can only exist if it is based on territory. Such principles, speaking objectively, have developed in all schools of positive law, and are accepted and admitted by the international system.

" Now no one has ever thought or affirmed anything else ; and in the same way no one has ever imagined that because of this the sovereignty of the State could be diminished or offended.

" The old accusations brought against the Vatican : namely thirst for domination, desire to humiliate the lay power by territorial claims, hope of weakening it, ambition for a civil principality as an end in itself—all that falls to the ground, not only before the moral dignity of the Church, which is above suspicion, but also before the pure and simple logical and juridical principle which is ours ; a principle which the other side are at last discovering to be no longer hostile and unacceptable, thanks to solicitude for national interests, common sense, and an impartial examination of the situation."

It would require a whole volume to reproduce all the comments to which this article in the *Osservatore* gave rise, so decisive in the evolution of the " Roman Question " appeared the principles affirmed, or rather recalled, so clearly by the authorised organ of the Holy See. I believe that not a single journal from Rome down to the smallest town remained silent in this matter. Let us reproduce a few lines from the *Tempo*, the voice of the friends of Giolitti, who, having been the first to speak of " a square centimetre

of territory," had special reason for pleasure at seeing the organ of the Vatican show such breadth of mind :

" The *Osservatore Romano*, in an editorial which has something more than an official value, faces the question at its vital point, bringing out clearly the point of view of the Vatican.

" It is written as always, with that wise moderation, that diplomatic style, in the best sense of the word, that calm mastery of its own thought that reveals the full and conscious gravity of its purpose.

" It is also a tribute that is fittingly rendered to the representatives of the greatest spiritual organisation of the world. It is well that Italian citizens should know with whom they have to deal, and no longer allow themselves to be carried away by a few last flickers of past passions and prejudices. The Church, like ourselves, has changed, but has remained true to herself. She has taken cognizance of the changes of history. We must do the same, and with equal loftiness of mind."

And the *Tempo* is not afraid to conclude with the following words in the name of all Liberal and Democratic Catholics :

" Our national problem, complex as it is ; our future, which may be so brilliant, impose upon us the necessity of coming to an agreement with this institution which, bearing the names of Christ and Rome, has passed through the centuries without ever denying the one or the other, even in times of inevitable darkness and turmoil."

This article is entitled " Towards Conciliation," and the title is as truly as significant as the contents. It reveals a method of treating the Holy See which, could they return to the world, would certainly astonish the rigid legislators of 1871 as well as those of the time of Zanardelli, for whom all praise of the Vatican was an insult to his country.

But there is better and more significant to follow. Three days after the article in the *Osservatore Romano*, the

question came before the Chamber itself, and a deputy openly declared, amid the applause of a great part of his audience :

". . . There is one problem which rises above all these contingent problems, and for which I claim the attention of the representatives of the party of the people ; it is the historic problem of the relations between Italy and the Vatican (signs of increased attention).

" All of us who during the last fifteen or twenty years have absorbed the writings of Carducci have hated that ' cruel old wolf,' the Vatican ; it was in these words, I believe, that Carducci spoke of it in an ode *A Ferrare* ; we have heard speak of a *sombre mysterious Pontiff*, against whom the poet sets *vates*, the mouthpiece of august truth and of the future.

" We have heard talk of a black-haired virgin of the Tiber, who was later to show the pilgrim journeying towards St. Peter's the ruins of ' a nameless shame.'

" But all this, which in the field of literature may be very brilliant, seems to us Fascists, who pride ourselves on our unprejudiced minds, somewhat anachronistic.

" I affirm that the Latin and imperial tradition of Rome is to-day represented by Catholicism (applause).

" If it be true, as Mommsen said some twenty-five or thirty years ago, that one cannot remain in Rome without a universal idea, I think and affirm that the universal idea that exists to-day is that which radiates from the Vatican (applause)."

Who is it who speaks with this vigorous zest, this *imperativa brevitas* ? As you have doubtless guessed, it is Benito Mussolini, then chief of a party of action, ardently patriotic, to-day President of the Council of the Kingdom of Italy. After that, who in Italy will ever again dare to affirm that the " Roman Question " is insoluble.

### 5. *Can the " Roman Question " be Solved ?*

Certainly it was not solved at once, for it would be somewhat ingenuous to imagine that a mere Press campaign

could at once change the face of the world. At the time of writing these lines the " Roman Question " is officially in exactly the same position as in 1871. But is it the same with public opinion? No. Here immense changes have taken place, of which the campaign we have just noticed offers a striking revelation.

Even though no outward change has been made, at bottom everything is changed.

First of all Italy.

It would be puerile to contend that the Italy of 1923, recently emerged victorious from the Great War, scarcely yet formed, is no longer the Italy of 1870. This truth must be obvious to the most myopic. But, in spite of this obvious fact, I am inclined to think that in France and Europe, as also in America and other distant countries, the historical miracles that have been accomplished by Italy in the last half-century are not fully realised. There is no other country so well known and at the same time so little known. By a phenomenon, strange at first sight but in reality easily explained, it happens that the thousands of travellers who come year after year to inspect the monuments, works of art, relics of the past, and landscapes of the Italian peninsula are ignorant of, or do not understand the great and profound people who live in this glorious land. Almost everyone knows Italy—I mean the beautiful Italy that can be seen with the eye; very few know the Italians. Or, rather, what is worse, all cherish wrong and out-of-date ideas about them, ideas dating back to ancient legends.

Such a phenomenon should be explainable, and indeed explains itself. To accuse the whole world of malevolence is a ready and unreflecting popular sentiment, but it is unjust and absurd. If Italy is so little known it is through her own fault, or rather her own merit. She has grown too quickly, and is still growing daily with a bewildering rapidity which confounds superficial observers—that is, the great majority. She is like those robust children one always fails to recognise, so great is the change a few months produce. The history of Modern Italy is, indeed, nothing but a great burst of growth. Only sixty years ago she had not even the appearance of a nation, and the words of Metternich, when he called her a *geographical expression*, could still be justified. But beneath it all the latent nation existed ; for in spite of the political divisions into kingdoms and states there was a single people, speaking the same language, producing the same literature, practising the same arts and jealously guarding the memories of the same ancient greatness. So much so that after the prolonged shock of the French Revolution Italy realised that she, too, might shake off her past. The effort she made was sustained and nourished by all the ideas of unity and greatness with which her artists and poets had inspired her for a thousand years and more. That is why, since Palestro and Solferino, evolution was so rapid, for it had silently worked down to the very heart of the race since the days when Dante, Petrarch, Machiavelli and so many others had proclaimed the destiny of united Italy. In reality Italy has had to realise in sixty years what other countries have taken five or six centuries to accomplish. And she

has succeeded in this miracle because she had been prepared for it six hundred years ago.

The result is that her transformation from year to year, and sometimes even from month to month, has been literally prodigious. This explains how men of 1921 can voice new and bold ideas which would have staggered their fathers or grandfathers of 1871. It also explains why foreigners passing through this country are sometimes disconcerted by the dizzy progress of her contemporary history.

Now if, on the one hand, Italy has changed much during the last fifty years, the Holy See, on the other, has not remained completely stable, at least as far as its political wisdom is concerned. True, there is no comparison between the rapidity of Italy's evolution, that of a country at once very old and very new which has had to remake itself in half a century by dint of tremendous effort, and the serene patience of the pontifical power, solidly established for nineteen centuries upon an unshakable foundation and advancing towards the future in the consciousness of its eternity. And if, when contrasted with Italy, whose history is one of perpetual development, the Church gives the impression of a stability which no contingency can shake, it is none the less true that in the minds and feelings of the men who control the Church and live in contact with the events of which she is the centre, there has gradually come about, if not a change in the strict sense of the word, at least tranquillity, slow and insensible at first, but more apparent during these last few years.

Now that is very human, but also very divine.

The Church, in fact, cannot hate. As we have seen, through the whole of history she defends herself with vigour against those who assail her, and sometimes with terrible vigour against those who threaten her independence; but it is always the great-hearted impetuosity of Peter attacking Malchus. At heart she nurses no lasting rancour, not even against Caesar. The only thing that matters to her is that she should be allowed to exercise with complete liberty the spiritual and universal power which is her very mission. From the moment those whom she has rightly or wrongly regarded as her enemies take sincere steps towards conciliation, the Church, by her very nature, can only go to meet them, for her aim is peace on earth and goodwill towards men. Now, from Pius IX down to the present Pope, efforts, confused and vague at first, but incontestably sincere, have constantly been made by generous Italian patriots and rulers, and even by the throne itself, towards the desired conciliation. The Church replied with extreme reserve, and with her eternal prudence, for these efforts almost always remained in the void and she was obliged each time to reiterate the existence of her imprescriptible rights.

Nevertheless, peace was working in men's minds, and each new Pope brought to his relations with the century a more markedly conciliatory attitude than his predecessor. There is on this subject already a certain difference between the reign of Leo XIII and that of Pius IX ; there is an even greater between those of Pius X and Leo XIII. In spite

of the outspoken protestations which Pope Sarto was called upon to issue in unforgettable circumstances, the Italian people instinctively felt that he was not their enemy and loved him as much for his equanimity as for his universal charity.

Shall I recall the spontaneous popular grief in Rome at the death of Benedict XV, in spite of the fact that he had had to undergo the severe test of the war. The whole Italian nation surrounded his obsequies with an atmosphere of sympathy, so convinced were they that he was in no way hostile to the nation.

Who does not remember the cries of enthusiasm that resounded through Rome and the whole peninsula when Pope Pius XI, breaking through the tradition maintained by his three predecessors, pronounced over the city and the universe—*Urbi et orbi*—the apostolic benediction, his face turned to the cheering crowd! There is nothing bold, then, in speaking of a slow mental evolution having taken place on the right bank of the Tiber concerning the relations of the Holy See with Italy. It is true that the "Roman Question" remains fundamentally where it was in the sense that Pius XI, as we have already noted, does not cease to claim the rights of the Holy See. But with regard to this question there no longer exists on either side, as was the case fifty years ago, either the scornful and intransigent tone of the right bank or the hostile, carping tone of the left. This, in itself, is nothing short of an historical revolution. The campaign of 1921 clearly marks a new phase of this indubitable evolution.

This is where we stand to-day. Perhaps we are even in advance of this, for since 1921 we have had the symbolical benediction from the square of St. Peter's. We have also had, on the other bank, the rise to power of Benito Mussolini, the orator who so eloquently greeted the universal power of the Papacy in the Chamber itself. It is from this point, then, that in future we must set out to examine whether the solution of the " Roman Question " is possible or not.

Now what is the exact position to-day ?

On the one hand, Italian public opinion, at least that of the advance guard, recognises through the influential Press, popular, democratic, and patriotic :

1. *That the necessary sovereignty of the Pope is not assured by the " Law of Guarantees," now out of date ;*

2. *That real sovereignty must be based on territory, whether " only a centimetre square," as some say : or " the apostolic palaces," as others say ;*

3. *That the new Italy can perfectly well grant this necessary territory without affecting or diminishing the sovereignty and honour of the State.*

So much is clear, and what is the substance of the Vatican's reply through its organ, the *Osservatore Romano* ?

1. *The " Law of Guarantees " can only be accepted by the Holy See if it forms part of a bilateral contract accepted by mutual agreement.*

2. *In order that the Holy See may realise its complete independence and sovereignty a territorial solution is necessary.*

3. *This territory is not an end in itself. In claiming it the Church is not swayed by any desire for terrestrial domination, and does not wish in any way to humiliate the State or diminish its power;*

4. *The Holy See, without entering into the merits of the different territorial proposals that have been put forward, asks only for visible and indisputable recognition of her rightful sovereignty.*

As will be seen, the two sides have not yet quite met, but they are not very far apart. What an advance since Mentana, since the breach of Porta Pia, and even since Loubet's visit to Rome!

What, in fact, does the Church claim to-day? Her former States? No. Rome? No. A Roman quarter? Not even that. She asks for no part of Italy already inhabited, no rule over any population, no pompous principality. She wants a bit of territory henceforward inalienable, constituting for her a full and complete sovereignty, without any interference or any protection from any other State whatsoever. In short, the Pope must be absolute master of his own house, on the express condition, however, that in this territory must be included the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, the immovable stone upon which the Church has been built.

And what does Italian opinion suggest, at any rate that very important part of it whose statements we have reproduced?

It recognises also that this territory is necessary and, as a first step, proposes full sovereignty over the apostolic palaces and their dependencies.

Is this enough or not? These are details which do not concern us, and which it is the place of others to examine. I will mention, however, simply for the sake of information, the various proposals, reasonable or chimerical and usually the fruits of the sagacity or fancy of newspaper reporters, brochure writers, and drawing-room gossips. Some merely propose to extend the Vatican gardens a little, so as to give the Holy See enough space to lodge the embassies and officials of the Curial. For instance, the new principality might be extended north-east as far as the Villa Pamphili, which it might absorb, and south-west as far as that melancholy "Pineta Sacchetti," which may be seen from the top of the Janiculum, as one looks beyond St. Peter's to a hill of considerable height where, like a natural colonnade, a harmonious forest of pines rises against the sky. Within this considerable stretch of territory there is not a single village, not a hamlet, nothing but a few lonely farms which could easily be expropriated so that no single Italian citizen would be forced to become an inhabitant of the new State.

Others dream of a rather wider kingdom, reaching to the sea by a strip of land, at the extremity of which a new port might be constructed. That would permit the Holy See to have its window freely open to the whole world.

Finally others . . .

But let us stop. These are, for the moment, merely plans, hypotheses, and dreams which it will be time to discuss when the basis of the question has been solved. This is not yet. Let us not conceal the considerable

difficulties—material difficulties, political difficulties, and, above all, moral difficulties. In spite of Italy's bewildering rapidity of evolution there remain among her forty million inhabitants a great number who still regard with alarm the idea of this fresh leap towards the future. It has been so often said during the last half-century that never, under any pretext, would Italy give back a single inch of reconquered national territory that it seems hard at first to hear that anything must be ceded, were it "only a square centimetre."

While a select circle of writers and politicians of bold mind clear the ditch, the majority still stand hesitating on the brink. I know personally men of very keen intelligence and very acute political mind, such as one meets with so often south of the Alps, who bridle at once when one mentions a territorial solution.

"What?" they say. "Is Italy not to be mistress in her own country?"

One answers with the *Messaggero*, with the *Tempo*, and other democratic and loyally Constitutional journals, that such a solution cannot in any way diminish the prestige and power of the State any more than they are diminished by the republic of San Marino; they won't listen.

"Not an inch of Italian territory!"

Others, less intransigent, would be ready to cede; but they reply hesitatingly:

"What would happen in time of war?"

What makes them specially uneasy is the tongue of land stretching to the sea.

" In that case," they say, " our soldiers would have to cross foreign territory to reach the front ? "

One replies that war is an exceptional state and that consequently it would be possible, from the beginning, to foresee and provide for the case of war by exceptional measures. But they are not reassured, and there again lies, and will continue to lie for a long time, the impassable abyss.

But is such resistance, passive and one might almost say " massive," to remain for ever insuperable ? It would be difficult to say so finally. From the moment there appeared an advance guard sufficiently strong and authoritative to open the campaign of May–June, 1921, and from the moment that this campaign echoed so clearly through the whole Italian Press, an idea was set moving which sooner or later will inevitably stir the mass itself. When such a movement makes itself felt in the public mind it is bound to produce gradual progress.

Is it Italy's place to take the last step or the Vatican's ?

This is not for us to answer.

And yet in the article of 5th June, 1921, the *Messaggero* quoted the words of Cardinal Gasparri that the Holy See had confidence, for the solution of this problem, " in the feeling of justice of the Italian people." According to the Holy See, then, the solution lies with Italy.

Crispi, on the other hand, said : " The greatest statesman of Italy will be the man who solves the ' Roman Question.' " According to Crispi, then, it is for an Italian statesman to speak the final word.

Moreover, it certainly seems clear that the Vatican cannot go further, and that everything depends on time first of all, as Crispi said, and next on a great statesman, as this clear-sighted prophet added.

But even now one thing seems certain : namely, that the Italy of Mussolini is already no longer the same as the Italy of Giovanni Lauza, of Deprets, of Crispi, of Zanardelli, of Sonnino, or even of Giolitti. In view of the evolution accomplished from 1871 to 1921, what may not happen between 1921 and 1971 ? And what in a hundred years, or a thousand years ? Indeed, let us never forget, when we watch the activity of the Roman Church, that we are watching a power for which fifty years, and even a century, count less than for us one fleeting year. Conscious of eternity, she can wait for anything.

# EPILOGUE

## TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Now Peter feels himself eternal, and therein lies his strength; we, too, feel that he is, and in that lies his greatness.

This impression of eternity takes such a hold on anyone who lives long enough in Rome that he cannot shake it off, even if he try.

Ask any Roman by birth or adoption, be he Catholic or Non-Catholic, or even Anti-clerical, what he thinks of the Holy See, and not one will dare to speak of a possible end; so deep is the certainty that such a power, founded on an idea and consequently intangible, cannot be destroyed by any generation of men.

About a year ago I remember how the whole Press was amazed at the impression of splendour made upon eye-witnesses by the festival ceremonies of the Eucharistic Congress, held in the streets of Rome a few months after the coronation of Pius XI. There was nothing new in this, but it was revealed anew to the crowd, and testified to the really extraordinary position at present occupied by the Papacy.

To give an idea of the state of public feeling I will quote the words of an observer who lived at the other pole of religious Rome—the director of a financial agency, and a Roman of long standing, who has seen, weighed, and judged

many events, and who, an excellent Israelite, observes and appreciates everything without prejudice. Just after the close of the Congress I met him one morning—in June, 1922. As soon as he had greeted me he began to talk, not of the Genoa Conference which was sitting at the time, nor of Lloyd George, nor of Tchitcherine, nor of the Communists, nor of the Fascists, nor even of Mussolini or Gabriele d'Annunzio ; he talked to me of the Pope and the Eucharistic Congress, and the impression made upon him by all disinterested spectators like himself. That impression was a mingling of admiration and astonishment, enthusiasm and awe; as in the presence of a phenomenon which can neither be prevented nor contested, but which makes one wonder what is coming. He said :

" There is no doubt about it. This is the greatest event since the war, and marks the beginning of a new era. Good or bad ? Auspicious or dangerous ? The future will tell. What we have just seen in Rome surpasses in importance anything we have seen elsewhere, in Paris or Washington, San Remo or Cannes, Spa or Genoa. For in the case of these various enigmas of contradictory ideas one felt one was living in the ephemeral, the contingent ; they were building on sand, or at the most on piles. Here we have the clear vision of a work of wide reach which has long been preparing, whose foundations go down deep into the centuries of the past and whose cupola will be completed in the future. Catholicism has regained all its influence. To-day it is the only true power in the universe. And amid the confusion of other efforts, the manifest failure of Bolshevism,

it alone brings something organic and concrete into the disordered and uneasy desires of humanity, unsettled by the war. The Church at this moment is stronger than she has ever been."

"Provided," said a mutual friend, "that her victory does not lead her into mistakes!"

"She will not make any," replied the first speaker, "for she has learned her lesson, and has been transformed by her long trial. How these people are masters of themselves! Have you noticed it? How well they know how to control themselves—the only secret of controlling and ruling others! How careful they have been not to shock anything or anybody in their silent preparation for this great success they have just achieved! How cleverly they have made the victory acceptable, without even pausing to proclaim their success publicly. How skilfully they have managed to disarm their enemies and win over the indifferent! Never doubt it. In this Europe of ours, with its quarrels between transitory rulers, whose mastery lasts a few months or even a few days, the Holy See, should it so desire, will be the true moral master of the future."

These were the words in which a man of a different religion talked to me of the Roman Church. I leave to the imagination the tone in which Catholics expressed themselves, and even men who were regarded as Anti-clericals.

One of the Roman newspapers of Liberal and Government tendency wrote about the same time:

"Never has the Pope been such an absolute sovereign of souls, and never has this sovereignty been so little contested. Let us take the

greatest names of the Church. Their reigns were periods of continual storm. Gregory VII, Julius II, Leo X, Sixtus Quintus; all saw their moral power continually hampered by the fact that their temporal power was always in dispute. Their power was itself the object of their enemies' threatening schemes. In Rome the various parties squabbled over, and arranged among themselves the influence of the Sovereign Pontiff, and the necessity under which he always laboured to take part in the struggles of the century gave to his power something human and temporal which made him like the other kings.

"Now when, on the other hand, one sees Rome at a time of worldly ceremony, like the present Eucharistic Congress, one has a direct and immediate impression that the Pope is first after God; above states, above kings, above nations, above everything; encircled by a sort of superhuman nimbus, and that all hatred even is finally silent in his presence. . . ."

Such in general, was the tone of the Roman Press, even the most Liberal and mundane, even that part which used to flaunt a noisy Anti-clericalism. One has only to remember as historical curiosities the time when, on the "Campo di Fiore," a few yards from the Farnese Palace, the statue of Giordano Bruno was unveiled to the sound of government and municipal trumpets; and the time, more recent still, when shouts of "Long live Ferrer!" rang under the Vatican windows, to see what a tremendous change has taken place in the public mind.

What are the reasons for this state of things? Several newspapers have hunted for them, not without some customary disagreement. There are two, however, on which they seem to agree. The first concerns the personality of Pius XI. Many Catholic, and even non-Catholic writers declare, indeed, that for the great majority of pilgrims questioned by them, no matter from what country they come to Rome, the personal attraction of

Pius XI lies in his deserved reputation as a scholar, a man of letters, and—let us use the word—an "intellectual." His predecessors were pious popes or excellent diplomats; he, in addition, is a man "of the highest culture," and, as a Roman journalist observed, "This seems to afford common satisfaction to all good Catholics."

But this reason, however just, is not sufficient. Whatever may be the individual merit of a Pope, it cannot in itself explain the influence of the Papacy, whose glory has for so many hundred years shown itself manifestly impersonal. If, without going so far back as Gregory the Great, we merely look at what has happened in Rome since the new régime, we shall see that from Pius IX to Pius XI the halo of the Holy See has widened from reign to reign.

But the usual reason given by the press of Italy and elsewhere brings us back unexpectedly, and this time entirely sympathetically, to the actuality of the "Roman Question": namely, that the continually growing moral greatness of the Papacy rises from the mystic isolation in which the spiritual father of all the faithful lives in the heart of the Christian world.

The sublime irony of history! Obviously, when in 1870 the adversaries of the Sovereign Pontificate protested and thundered against the temporal power, they did not foresee this result of a political revolution, which they hoped, on the contrary, would bring about the ruin and end of the Church. They did not think that the day would come when this spoliation would be regarded by lay, and sometimes non-Catholic writers as the very cause of an increase

in the power of the Holy See, a power henceforward invulnerable.

What the newspapers of Rome and the entire world have thus observed, I have often confirmed by my own hopes. How many times, in Rome and elsewhere, when I have happened to speak of the Pope, I have been able to observe what alluring poetry surrounds the present life of the Sovereign Pontiff in the eyes of the people; living as he does —without ever setting foot outside—in a palace inaccessible to the greater part of mankind, where he can be imagined without being seen, and whence he only descends for the great ceremonies in the Basilica, surrounded by a pomp which is not his, but belongs to the greatness he temporarily personifies.

Indeed it is perhaps desirable, in so far as the splendour of the successor of the Apostle is concerned, that this state of things, which political reasoners condemn as stupid but which for sensitive people assumes a character of superhuman beauty, should last for ever.

In the old days, when the Holy See, by the nature of things and for the fulfilment of its lofty mission, possessed a temporal and always stormy power, which involved it directly with the vicissitudes of the empires, those who were blind to the purely spiritual basis of its power sometimes thought that it, too, might be condemned to submit to the law imposed upon human things, all of which are perishable. But, now that the inevitable struggle of 1870 has passed over Rome and the Papacy has emerged from the test with renewed strength; now, especially, that the

world war has run its course, and that the successor of Peter, despite the contradictory passions unloosed by the tempest, has come out with increased strength in the eyes of the universe, there is no longer any doubt as to his immortality. His future is incommensurable.

True, no one knows what may happen in Europe in a hundred, or five hundred years. We have witnessed such transformations in the political geography of this old Europe that all hypotheses become possible—nay, all dreams. Empires, republics, dictatorships, federations, free cities, soviets, collectivisms? Who can say? Have we to suffer again a cataclysm of human folly? Is our Latin West once more to witness the migrations of the great white or yellow barbarians? Or shall we see blossom over this well-tilled planet the terrestrial paradise of integral communism? These are so many hollow prophecies, which must be left to the drawing-room sibyls and the public-house prophets. But one thing of which we are sure is that there will still reign from the intangible throne of Peter a Pius XVIII, a Leo XXII, a Benedict XXV, or a Gregory XXX, or the bearer of any other name that the elected of the Conclave may care to choose; and that, if the chance conflicts of the century oblige him to give up his abode in the Vatican, he will live in a hut, or, if necessary, in a cave; still master of men's souls, still the apostle of love and peace; handing on from pope to pope the ring of the fisherman, and waiting tranquilly through the changes of history for the infallible triumph of the ideal. . . .

There exist in the Vatican, in a little room near the Sistine Chapel, some frescoes extolling the power of the Church—the work of Vasari, Salviati, and other painters of the sixteenth century. One of these large mural paintings represents the famous scene where the aged Alexander III, so long exiled from Rome and fleeing from one refuge to another, has just signed the Treaty of Venice, after the defeat of his enemy, Barbarossa, who thereafter bowed before him.

The man vanquished at Legnano, who had dreamed of restoring the old Roman Empire and making the Pontiff his docile chaplain, here appears repentant and submissive. But, conquered as he is, he does not forget that he is still Caesar and with the obstinacy of pride he hesitates to kiss the toe of the old priest, who for so many years has been his adversary. And to show that it is not to him he shows reverence, but only to the symbol of Christianity, he is muttering:

"Not to you, but to Peter!"

Now, Alexander III, the equal of Gregory VII, who has just conquered and humiliated one of the most formidable enemies of the Holy See, sees fit to remind him, simply, that each Pope continues the first Pope; he replies:

"Both to Peter and to me."

Then Barbarossa bows his head while Alexander, tracing with his hand the gesture of pardon, places one sandal on the shoulder of the humiliated Emperor to signify the victory of the Church.

*" Non tibi, sed Petro ! "*

*" Et Petro et mihi ! "*

These eight words taken together might serve as the epigraph of this work. They sum up forcefully the master idea, and the scene which they evoke symbolises for all the centuries the glory of the Papacy. Under whatever new form, whatever unexpected mask, Barbarossa may reappear, we know that sooner or later the successors of Alexander and Peter will make him bow before their moral majesty, and will ultimately destroy him.

*Et agnus vincet illos.*

THE END

# APPENDIX

## THE LAW OF GUARANTEES

### LAW CONCERNING THE PREROGATIVES OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF AND THE HOLY SEE, AND CONCERNING THE RELATIONS OF THE STATE WITH THE CHURCH, 13TH MAY, 1871.

### *Title I*

#### PREROGATIVES OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF AND THE HOLY SEE

*Article* 1.—The person of the Sovereign Pontiff is sacred and inviolable.

*Article* 2.—Any attempt against the person of the Sovereign Pontiff, or incitement to such attempt is punishable by the penalties established for an attempt against the person of the king or incitement thereto.

Public offences and insults directly committed against the person of the Sovereign Pontiff by means of speeches, acts, and the means indicated in Article 1 of the Press law, are punishable by the penalties stipulated in Article 19 of that law.

Such crimes will be offences against public law, and will be dealt with by the Court of Assizes.

Discussion of religious matters is entirely free.

*Article* 3.—The Italian Government renders to the Sovereign Pontiff within the territory of the kingdom sovereign honours, and extends to him the pre-eminence of honour recognised by Catholic sovereigns.

It is within the faculty of the Sovereign Pontiff to maintain the customary number of guards attached to his person and for the surveillance of the palaces without prejudice to the obligation and duties which for such guards result from laws in force within the kingdom.

*Article* 4.—The annual grant of 3,225,000 liras in favour of the Holy See is continued.

With this sum, equal to that provided for by the Roman budget under the title: *Sacred Apostolic Palaces, Sacred College, Secretariat of State,*

*and Foreign Diplomatic Order*, it is understood that the emoluments of the Sovereign Pontiff and the various ecclesiastical needs of the Holy See, the ordinary and extraordinary administration, and the maintenance of the apostolic palaces and their dependencies, the salaries, gratuities, and pensions of the guards mentioned in the preceding article, attachés to the Pontifical Court, and incidental expenses such as the ordinary maintenance and protection of the museums and libraries attached to the sacred palaces, and the salaries, gratuities and pensions of those employed therein will be met.

This endowment of three million two hundred and twenty-five thousand liras will be entered in the great book of public debt under the formula of perpetual and inalienable annuity in the name of the Holy See ; and during the vacations of the Holy See its payment will be continued to provide for all the needs of the Roman Church during such intervals of time.

This endowment will remain exempt from all kinds of taxation or government, communal or provincial charge ; and it cannot be reduced, even in the case where the Italian Government should hereafter determine to take into its own charge the expenses incidental to the museums and libraries.

*Article* 5.—The Sovereign Pontiff, in addition to the endowment established by the preceding article, shall continue to enjoy the apostolic palaces of the Vatican and the Lateran, with all the edifices, gardens, and land appertaining thereto, as well as the Villa de Castel Gandalfo, with all its dependencies and everything thereto attached.

The said palaces, villa, and annexes, as also the museums, library, and art and archaeological collections situated therein, are inalienable and exempt from all tax, charge, or expropriation for reasons of public utility.

*Article* 6.—During the vacations of the Pontifical See no judiciary or political authority shall, for any motive whatsoever, impede or limit the personal liberty of the cardinals.

The Government shall provide that the assemblies of the Conclave and Oecumenical Councils shall not be disturbed by any external violence.

*Article* 7.—No officer of the public authority or representative of the public power shall, in the exercise of his proper function, enter the palaces or places serving as the habitual residence or temporary dwelling

of the Sovereign Pontiff, or in which may be assembled either a Conclave or an Oecumenical Council, save with the express authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, Conclave, or Council.

*Article* 8.—Any examination, perquisition, or seizure of papers, documents, books, or registers in the offices or congregations of a pontifical character endowed with attributions manifestly spiritual is prohibited.

*Article* 9—The Sovereign Pontiff is entirely free to exercise all the functions of his spiritual ministry, and to affix to the doors of the basilicas and churches of Rome notice of the acts of the aforesaid ministry.

*Article* 10.—The ecclesiastics who, by reason of their office, participate in Rome in the emanation of the acts of the spiritual ministry of the Holy See are not subject by reason of these to any prosecution, investigation, or perquisition by the public authority.

Any foreign person invested with ecclesiastical office shall enjoy the same personal guarantees as Italian citizens in virtue of the laws of the kingdom.

*Article* 11.—The envoys of foreign Governments to the Holy See shall enjoy within the kingdom all the prerogatives and immunities accorded to diplomatic agents by international law.

In respect of offences of which they are the object, the same penal sanctions are applicable as for the envoys of foreign powers to the Italian Government.

To the envoys of His Holiness to Italian Governments are assured within the territory of the kingdom the customary prerogatives and immunities according to international right, to have access to their mission or to return from it.

*Article* 12.—The Sovereign Pontiff shall correspond freely with the episcopate and with the whole Catholic world without any hindrance on the part of the Italian Government.

To such end he shall be granted the right to establish within the Vatican, or within any other of his residences, postal and telegraphic offices served by employees of his own choosing.

The pontifical post-office shall be able to correspond directly under sealed cover with any post-office of foreign administrations, or remit its own correspondence to the Italian offices. In both cases the transport

of telegrams and correspondence bearing the stamp of the pontifical office shall be exempt from all taxation and all charges on Italian territory.

Mails despatched in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff shall have the status of cabinet mails for foreign Governments.

The pontifical telegraphic office shall be connected with the telegraphic system of the kingdom at the expense of the State.

The telegrams despatched by the aforesaid office, and specifically marked *pontifical*, shall be received and despatched subject to the prerogatives laid down for State telegrams, and shall be exempt from all charge within the kingdom.

These same advantages shall be accorded to telegrams of the Sovereign Pontiff or signed by his order, which, bearing the official stamp of the Holy See, may be presented at any telegraphic office of the kingdom.

Telegrams addressed to the Sovereign Pontiff shall be exempt from charges usually borne by the receiver.

*Article* 13.—In the township of Rome and in the six suburbicarian Sees, the seminaries, academies, colleges, and other Catholic institutions founded for the purpose of ecclesiastical education and culture, shall continue under the sole authority of the Holy See, without interference from the scholastic authorities of the kingdom.

### *Title II*

*Article* 14.—All special restrictions of the right of assembly of members of the Catholic clergy are abolished.

*Article* 15.—The Government renounces the right of apostolic legation in Sicily, and in the whole kingdom the right of nomination or suggestion in the matter of the ascription of major benefices.

Major and minor benefices may only be conferred upon citizens of the realm, except in the city of Rome and the suburbicarian Sees.

No innovation is made in the disposal of benefices under royal patronage.

*Article* 16.—The royal *exequator* and *placet*, and all other forms of Government assent concerning the publication and execution of acts under ecclesiastical authority, are abolished.

However, until further notice, in the special law referred to in Article 18 there remain, subject to the royal *exequator* and *placet*, such acts of

ecclesiastical authority as concern the disposal of ecclesiastical property and the attribution of major or minor benefices except those of the town of Rome and the suburbicarian Sees.

No change is made in the provisions of the civil laws relative to the creation and means of maintenance of the ecclesiastical institutions and to the transfer of their liens.

*Article* 17.—In spiritual and disciplinary matters no claims or appeal against the acts of the ecclesiastical authority are permitted, and no execution by restraint is either recognised or accorded.

The civil jurisdiction has the right to be made aware of the juridical acts and any act of the ecclesiastical authorities aforementioned.

However, such acts are annulled if they are contrary to the laws of the State or to public order, or if they offend the rights of private persons and if they constitute a misdemeanour they are subject to the penal laws.

*Article* 18.—The conservation and administration of the ecclesiastical properties of the kingdom shall be provided for by subsequent laws.

*Article* 19.—In all matters coming within the sphere of the present law any provision now existing shall, if it be contrary to this same law, cease to have effect.

Turin, 13*th May*, 1871.

*Signed:* Victor Emmanuel.
*Countersigned:* G. Lauza, Visconti-Venosta, G. de Falco, Tunitius Sella, C. Correnti, E. Rigotti, G. Acton, S. Costagnola, G. Gadda.

## NOTES.

Note 1, page 65 : *The history of the first centuries of the Church.*

I am obliged, in this essay in historical synthesis, to pass quickly over the formidable events which marked the stormy first years of the active Church down to the coming of Charlemagne, and, later, down to the descent of the Germanic emperors. Those who wish to study in detail this interesting and stirring period should read the works of Gregovorius, Monsignor Duchesne, Monsignor Batiffol, Paul Allard, Luchaire, Lapôtre, Albers-Hedde, François-Xavier Fünch, Harnack, etc., to whom I have repeatedly had recourse, and I recommend to them particularly (in Italian) the *Stori sociale della Chiesa* of Monsignor Umberto Benigni.

Note 2, page 132 : *The death of Leo X.*

The version according to which Leo X is said to have died a victim of the intrigues of the agents of Charles V, and particularly those of the Petrucci family, is indicated in the compendious *History of the Universe*, by the German writer Monsignor Oncken. It seems that Count Gobineau, in his splendid book on the Renaissance, has adopted this version in the suggestive dialogue between Charles V and Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, later Pope Adrian VI (Edition Plon, pp. 465–466), which runs :

" *Adrian* : Leo X dead ? That is unexpected. He was only forty-six. Have you any details ?

" *Charles V* : My Ambassadors write that the Pope died of joy on hearing of the taking of Milan and the rout of the French by his troops. But here is a secret report from the master of the Sacred Palace, Pavis de Grassis, who gives reasons to suspect poison.

" *Adrian* : The Pope assassinated ? And why ?

" *Charles V* : Did not he put to death Petrucci and despoil many ? However that may be, Leo X is dead. Be seated. . . ."

The natural death of Pope Leo X during his mission to Magliana is, on the other hand, affirmed and proved by the reports of the doctors

of the period, whose documents are preserved in the archives of the Vatican. It must also be admitted that these rapid and sometimes immediate deaths, due to malarial fever, might lend themselves in romantic minds to suspicions of poisoning during such troubled times as the Renaissance, only a few years after the reign of the Borgias. But let us not forget that the great Raphael, the painter so beloved of Leo X, had died a few months before at a still earlier age than his enlightened patron, and from a similar and more rapid disease. Read in this connection, the dramatic and moving description of this death by Count Gobineau in his *Renaissance* (Edition Plon, pp. 452–457).

Note 3, page 172 : *The death of Pius X.*

With regard to the emotions which caused, or rather hastened, the death of Pius X (for he was already ill) there still exists a legend to which I should like particularly to draw attention, for I, like all Romans, believed in it for a long time myself, and may have contributed towards spreading it in France. It has been innocently accredited by most of the newspapers of Rome. Here is the story :

" After the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, Pius X, feeling the approach of war and foreseeing its calamities, had sent an autograph letter to the Emperor, Francis Joseph, begging him, in the name of Christ, not to let loose such a scourge, which would cause suffering to the whole of Europe, and particularly to the Austro-Hungarian people. This letter was to have been handed to the Emperor by the Nuncio at Vienna. But the Emperor had refused to receive the Nuncio, or to take cognizance of the letter. When the news of this refusal was carried to Pius X, this great Pope, much moved, and seeing that war was inevitable, suffered a severe heart-attack, and on the same evening took to his bed, which he was never again to leave."

Such is the story that has circulated in Rome for a long time, and circulates still. I have so often heard it told by people generally very well informed, and have so often read it in serious journals, that I was prepared to relate it in the present work. However, before reproducing the story, seized with scruples, I went to see Mgr. Enrico Pucci, one of the most learned and esteemed prelates at the Vatican, himself an ecclesiastical writer of great merit, and asked him his opinion on this subject. Mgr. Pucci at once put me on my guard, and warned me that he had doubts. He was then kind enough to seek precise information

himself from the best source, and informed me that this dramatic and rather sensational story was not confirmed in high places.

Mgr. Enrico Pucci then told me the true story, which I have related in this book (pp. 173–175). How true it is that truth is always finer than legend, and more poignant. The true story, so deeply symbolical and moving, had remained almost unknown to the general public.

Note 4, page 221: *Recent writings on the "Roman Question"—The King of Spain's journey to Rome—Mussolini's Ministry.*

The moral evolution that has occurred between 1870 and the present day in the relations between the Church and the Italian Government has given to some political writers, in Italy as well as France and elsewhere, the impression that the solution of the "Roman Question" was at hand, without there being any need for a formulation of temporal power, so reduced was it. This impression, beyond doubt illusory, has been particularly reinforced by the coming to power of M. Benito Mussolini; such an admirer of the Church, and one who, as a clear-sighted, sensible man, without any party prejudice, so well understands the indestructible power. The rumour has then spread more or less everywhere, and especially in France, that the official and public reconciliation of the two powers was imminent, and I have heard men whose opinion generally carried weight announce this great event for the "Holy Year" of the jubilee, which is, of course, 1925. Two French writers, who have both lived long in Rome, have recently handled the "Roman Question" from this point of view in recent publications, and, without going so far as to give any definite date to their prognostications, they have contributed towards spreading in France the belief that an amicable solution was at hand. One is M. Charles Loiseau in a recent book, published by Grasset and entitled *Politique romaine et sentiment français*; the other is M. Eugène Guichard in a study of "*La Question romaine*," which appeared in the *Mercure de France* of the 1st December, 1923.

M. Charles Loiseau, who is not only a talented historian but who also, during the war, played a considerable diplomatic rôle in Rome itself, since he was in reality the representative of the French Republic at the Holy See, has recently written a very interesting and valuable work on the policy of Benedict XV during and after the war. He there deals with the present situation of the "Roman Question," and is convinced that an understanding is imminent between the two powers,

an understanding which he describes as purely moral, and exclusive of any territorial solution. For he writes : " To reconcile Italian unity with the immanence of the Apostolic See in Rome is the difficulty to-day. Now here we have it almost settled in fact, and we have seen how little of it remains. In law it will persist until it has been settled by a formal agreement. This agreement no longer appears chimerical ; one feels it developing."

Then, after criticising and rejecting any possibility of a territorial solution, M. Charles Loiseau adds :

" On the other hand, as soon as one faces the moral aspect of the independence claimed by the Holy See one at once ceases to feel stifled by these strictly geographical and economic horizons, which, whatever one may do, only lend themselves to an apparent widening. Next, one realises that it is this moral independence which is of importance, as much to the dignity of the Holy See as to the interests of Catholicism, and the other is at most an indication."

And the solution which he recommends is a new *Law of Guarantees,* concerning which he says :

" . . . Would it not be natural to invite the Powers, at least those who are represented at the Vatican, to figure in this contract as parties and not as guarantors ? "

M. Loiseau is so convinced that this solution is imminent that he is already anxious about what will follow, and already foresees the rise of a new " *Roman Question.*"

" But who is to guarantee that the problem of to-morrow : the ' Roman Question ' developed, or, to speak more accurately, revived, will not consist in reconciling the interests of the Catholic and even non-Catholic nations with the event we foresee ? "

This, indeed, is premature solicitude, as we shall see later.

As for M. Eugène Guichard, the esteemed correspondent of the *Agence Havas,* in Rome, who has for nearly twelve years been studying the policy of the Holy See as well as that of Italy, he has published in the *Mercure de France* an article which aroused much comment, and in which, after exposing certain proposals for the territorial solution which were tentatively put forward during the war, and concluding that these were unrealisable, he confines himself finally to " the purely Italian solution of the ' Roman Question.' "

" . . . A solution which seems at present to appeal to an enormous majority of the clergy and Italian Catholic voters, and is based on the two following postulates :

" 1. No territorial concession on the part of Italy and no territorial claim on the part of the Holy See.

" 2. No international sanction of the present *Law of Guarantees.*"

M. Guichard is firmly convinced that this purely Italian solution is final and accepted by both sides, for he writes :

" It is now almost exclusively abroad—that is, in the minds of a certain number of Catholics and members of the foreign clergy—that the ' Roman Question ' is not yet solved. . . ."

He even supports this statement by quoting a line of Corneille :

*" Et le combat cessa faute de combattants ! "*

adding :

" These are the words which best define the position of the ' Roman Question.' "

Such categorical statements are always somewhat imprudent, but they are specially so in what concerns the wide-reaching policy of the Church, which concerns itself little with contemporary contingencies.

It is not my place here to criticise the opinions of MM. Charles Loiseau and Eugène Guichard, who, moreover, are both my friends; but it seems to me that they have looked at the question with minds preoccupied with politics, regarding the Church as on the same level as the Government. A government, indeed, however strong, is obliged to take into account the present and the opportunity in examining unsolved questions. Not so the Church. For her the present is only a passing accident, which will be nothing to-morrow, after to-morrow, in ten years, or in a century. To understand the Church objectively it is necessary to free one's mind from any obsession of contemporary and local politics, and regard her from the point of view of eternity and universality. One must cease for the moment to be an Italian, a Frenchman, a German, or Englishman, or to belong to any other nationality ; one must cease to belong to one's century, otherwise one is bound to be misled.

Only a few days after MM. Loiseau and Guichard had written their imperturbable judgments on the end of the " Roman Question," an event

of world-wide interest brought up this question again in a manner as sensational as it was unforeseen. They were not the only ones, however, who were shown to be false prophets, for even in Italy and in the most authoritative journals the same mistake was made.

The event of which I speak was the visit of the King of Spain to Rome. It will not have been forgotten that this interview between the Pope and the King of Spain aroused great interest. Not only did it meet with no kind of hostility from the Italian authorities, but, on the other hand, the Italian authorities did their best to enhance the outward brilliance of this royal visit to the Holy See, for the whole of the route that was to be followed by the Spanish sovereign from the Quirinal to the Vatican was lined with troops in full dress uniform.

Such outward manifestations seemed at first sight to justify the prophets of immediate reconciliation; and, indeed, many Italian papers, including some of great influence and wide circulation, hastened to announce in their turn that the "Roman Question" was finally solved. Then there appeared in the *Osservatore Romano* an article which made an enormous impression throughout the world, for it put things in their proper light in very clear terms. Here is the essential paragraph:

"The sore opened on 20th September, 1870, is not to be healed with poultices more or less warm. It is, and will remain, open until such measures are taken that not only the Holy See may enjoy the liberty and independence to which they have a right, but that, further, it may be evident to the eyes of the whole world that these are really enjoyed."

The visit of the King of Spain, by the way, was not an exceptional event, improvised under the reign of Pius XI and during the Government of Mussolini in Italy. The visits to Rome of a Catholic sovereign had been authorised once for all by Pope Benedict XV in the *Pacem* encyclical of the 20th May, 1920, which has already been quoted in the present work, and of which I will quote here the chief passage:

"But We desire to declare solemnly that the condescension of our attitude, advisable so it seems to us, and even made necessary by the excessive gravity of the present times, *will never be interpreted as a tacit abdication by the Holy See of its sacred rights.*"

It will be seen from this that Benedict XV had already foreseen what interpretations might be put upon the authorisation granted by him,

and he dissipated in advance the illusions to which it might give rise. Let us add that in so far as the visit of King Alphonso and Queen Victoria is concerned, this journey from Madrid to Rome had been decided upon long before—long before the rise to power of Mussolini in Italy and Primo de Rivera in Spain. The protest of the *Osservatore Romano,* which might have surprised those who lived from day to day, was yet in every point in conformity with the policy of the Holy See and its anterior acts. It was especially in conformity with the very declarations of the present Pope in the *Ubi arcano* encyclical, which he published some time after his elevation to the throne of St. Peter; for he expressed himself on the " Roman Question " in almost the same terms as those of the *Osservatore,* quoted above.

Pius XI had said :

" The divine origin and nature of Our power, as well as the sacred right of the community of the faithful spread throughout the world, requires that this sacred right *should be independent of all human authority, and should not be subject to human laws.* They require finally that the rights and power of the Roman Pontiff should be completely independent, and that this independence *should be made manifest.*"

These last words are recalled and developed insistently in the article of the *Osservatore Romano.* Now, what does Pius XI mean when he proclaims that the rights and power of the Pontiff " *should be completely independent, and that this independence should be made manifest* " ?

What does the official organ of the Vatican mean when it writes, " *It must be made completely evident to the eyes of the whole world that the Holy See enjoys fully the liberty and independence to which it has the right* " ? This means beyond doubt that the Holy See, which regards history *sub specie aeterni,* cannot be content with a vague, makeshift, and transitory solution, but has in view a final solution, giving it for ever undeniable independence. Now, how can such absolute independence be realised in the present state of world politics, and before the arrival of a new order ?

In one of two ways only : either (1) An internationalised law of guarantees ; or (2) Territorial possession.

The first alternative cannot be thought of for a single instant, even in connection with the apparent alternative put forward by M. Loiseau. Never can Italy consent to the control of other nations within her territory, and no one would ever think of asking this of her.

As for the territorial solution, I refer the reader to all that has been said in the chapter entitled: "*The Present Position of the 'Roman Question,'*" where an account is given of the famous Press campaign of 1921. Since that time, it is true, Italy has had the Fascist revolution and the rise to power of Benito Mussolini. Does Mussolini wish to, and can he give to the Holy See this small area of territory which would constitute an independent State? That is his secret, and he has not revealed it to anyone. But, even supposing he wished it, could he carry it out? He is assuredly the most powerful and most audacious man who has risen to power since the existence of the Italian kingdom, and the originality of his active genius doubtless reserves for us many surprises. He is a man in connection with whom one hesitates to pronounce the word impossible. And yet, master as he is of himself and others, one wonders, first, whether he would, and secondly, whether he could, solve the "Roman Question" in the direction in which, by the force of circumstances, the Holy See desires that it should be solved. Perhaps later, for he seems destined to remain long in power. But not yet.

The great majority of Italians, even in the entourage of the President of the Council, are, by instinct, opposed to the idea of any territorial cession whatsoever. To reach this result an entirely new frame of mind is required. This is not impossible, but it will not be immediate. The Papacy can wait, for it is patient. Pius XI, moreover, seems to be well aware of these moral difficulties, for in the *Urbi arcano* encyclical he concludes:

"It belongs to God to bring us this hour of justice and peace, and it is for him to make it strike; but it is for wise and well-intentioned men not to let it strike in vain. It will be one of the most solemn and fecund hours, both for the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ and for the pacification of Italy and the world."

The Pope, then, far from despairing, is counting on the solution in the future, and expecting it to come from Italy. But he has no illusions as to the imminence of the event.

The conclusion that must be drawn from all this is, once more, that the "Roman Question" is not insoluble, but certainly not solved, whatever my friend Eugène Guichard may say, and one cannot yet pay too much attention to the "new Roman Question," whatever my friend Charles Loiseau may think.

But that does not prevent the greatest courtesy from existing in the inevitable relations between the two Powers severally installed in Rome. For, in whatever concerns the tranquillity enjoyed by the Sovereign Pontiff in the Eternal City, I certainly think there is no longer anywhere the least anxiety, not even in the most remote parishes of the Cordilleras, the Andes, or the Rocky Mountains.

Note 5, page 220 : *Why the Pope does not leave the Vatican.*

There still persists, both in Italy and abroad, an illusion that one feels obliged to destroy in order to make known the truth on the subject of the " Roman Question "—namely, that the Pope could, without difficulty, leave the Vatican, and either walk through the streets of Rome or travel to other towns of the two continents.

It is natural that the people of Rome should maintain and cherish such an illusion, which, moreover, is so human. The great mass of the people of Rome profess for the Pope unchanging attachment and respect. They show it more and more at every opportunity, and it was made particularly manifest on the occasion of the recent death of Benedict XV and the election of Pius XI, when, under drenching rain, they awaited, in a dense crowd on the wide square of St. Peter's, the benediction of the newly-elected Pope. The people of Rome, then, ardently desire to see this Holy Father in the streets of the capital, acclaimed by the whole population, and this desire becomes a hope at each new coronation. But that this sympathetic and touching illusion on the part of the Roman people should be shared, sometimes, by writers who reflect, and who are acquainted with the laws of history, appears more extraordinary. How great, then, is the surprise of those who are acquainted with the " Roman Question " when they read in very responsible English newspapers that the Pope is thinking of going to London ; and, in the French Catholic newspapers, that the Pope intends to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes.

It is, therefore, not superfluous to recall in this connection that so long as the " Roman Question " remains unsolved, the Pope will not leave the Vatican, either to walk through the streets of Rome or to journey to London, Lourdes, Madrid, or elsewhere. It is not for us to judge whether the Holy See is wrong or right. However, without entering into a discussion of the subject, it is appropriate to observe that the single fact of leaving the Vatican to go into Rome or elsewhere would involve, on the part of the Pope, the obligation to accept the inevitable

and valuable co-operation of the Italian Government to watch over his safety. Of course, one may rest assured that the Italian Government would accomplish this high police duty with the greatest possible zeal and discretion. But, whatever may be the attitude of the Government, it would mean, for the Sovereign Pope, official acceptance of the protection of a Power worthy of all respect in itself, but against which the Holy See still maintains those claims of " imprescriptible rights " which precisely constitute the " Roman Question."

Now, just as the Popes have had to repudiate the *Law of Guarantees*, so they have now to refuse on the part of the Italian Government any relationship which should signify the evident protection of one Power over the other. It is therefore as a result of the " Roman Question," and solely by the will of the Holy See itself, that the Pope elected by the Conclave will pass the rest of his life in the palaces and gardens of the Vatican. This isolation, moreover, as I have said in the epilogue of this work (*v.* p. 259), far from being detrimental to the Holy See, by a sort of mystic, superhuman halo, increases, on the contrary, the prestige and glory of the Pope.

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